

CONTROVERSY

IS FRANCIS
A POLITICAL
POPE?

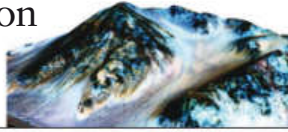
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stayed sober
for 26 years

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THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Why Boehner bailed out

Is the Republican Party
headed for self-destruction?

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Editor's letter

Is the pope a commie? When Pope Francis dared criticize the excesses of capitalism during his first visit to the U.S. over the past week, he was denounced in some quarters as a naïve, cloistered cleric—a Che Guevara in religious robes. On Fox News, Francis was called “a communist” and “Marxist” who should “stay home” because “he doesn’t like capitalism,” while in his *Washington Post* column George Will sniffed at the pope’s “woolly sentiments,” “shrill” tone, and “sanctimony.” Francis provoked these denunciations by saying climate change was a real problem that needed to be addressed, and by reminding us that the ultimate purpose of capitalism, and of politics, is to serve “the common good.” He also praised business as “a noble profession” and praised capitalism for lifting so many people “out of extreme poverty.” This is hardly radical stuff; Christianity and free-market fundamentalism are very different faiths. But in the partisan derangement that grips this country, suggest-

ing that the profit motive must be tempered by moral concerns makes you one of Them. (See Controversy.)

For a demonstration of capitalism free of any moral concerns, consider the example of drug company CEO Martin Shkreli. Shkreli just jacked up by more than 5,000 percent the price of a decades-old drug that AIDS and cancer patients have been taking to fight off a potentially fatal parasitic infection. His company “needed to turn a profit on this drug,” Shkreli shrugged. (See Talking Points.) Volkswagen, meanwhile, admitted it had secretly engineered 11 million cars to pass emissions tests in the lab but belch dirty exhaust on the road. (See Business.) Is capitalism the best economic system ever devised? No doubt about it. Does believing that the profit motive sometimes must be restrained make you a radical left-winger? Only in America.

William Falk
Editor-in-chief

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THE WEEK

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Boehner's shock resignation shakes the GOP

What happened

A fractious intra-party battle for control of the Republican leadership raged this week, following an announcement by House Speaker John Boehner that he would resign on Oct. 30. Long criticized by hard-line conservatives over his perceived failure to stand up to President Obama, the Ohio lawmaker will relinquish both his gavel and his congressional seat, which he has held since 1991. His leadership was under threat from a group of about 30 House Republicans, who wanted to block a temporary government funding bill in a bid to defund Planned Parenthood, the women's health group under fire for its abortion services. Knowing that congressional Democrats would block any spending measure that didn't continue funding for the organization—and that Republicans would likely be blamed if the government had to shut down for lack of funding—Boehner fell on his sword and advanced a “clean” spending measure, averting a government shutdown. “My first job as speaker is to protect the institution,” he said. “This prolonged leadership turmoil would do irreparable harm to the institution.”

Boehner, 65, who is widely expected to move into the lucrative world of political lobbying, planned to resign last year but stayed on after the surprise primary defeat of House Majority Leader Eric Cantor. While Boehner's decision to leave Congress was greeted with sadness by many Republican colleagues—and by President Obama, who described him as a “good man” and a “patriot”—it was cheered by his critics. “This is a great day for conservatives who want to see changes in Washington,” said Rep. Tim Huelkamp (R-Kan.). “It's time to elect a conservative that's actually going to work with conservatives.”

What the editorials said

Announcing his selfless, honorable decision, Boehner “looked like he'd just been released from prison,” said *The Wall Street Journal*. And who can blame him? For nearly five grueling years, the speaker has been “trapped between an implacable President Obama and an uncompromising faction within his own party.” The GOP's Tea Party zealots “equate compromise with selling out,” even in a divided government—making any kind of legislative progress all but impossible. Boehner has been punished for failing to deliver “victories no speaker could.”

But couldn't he at least have tried? asked *NationalReview.com*. Under Boehner, the House has never even voted on a conservative replacement for the Affordable Care Act, or a much-needed tax reform bill. He and other craven GOP leaders insist that doing so would be “counterproductive”—yet they never offer alternative strategies to advance conservative causes. Instead, they limit themselves to pushing through bipartisan legislation designed to appeal to business groups—“a recipe for demor-



Brought down by conservative hard-liners

alization among conservatives, loss of Republican popularity among swing voters, [and] further strife within the party caucus.”

“For a party eyeing next November's election, Boehner's resignation could not have come at a worse time,” said *The Boston Globe*. His replacement—most likely House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy—will have to be more accommodating to the Tea Party wing. And “if Congress lurches to the right, the presidential candidates are going to be under increased pressure to follow.” That could be “disastrous in a general election.”

What the columnists said

Don't cry for Boehner, said **Jeffrey Toobin** in *The New Yorker*. He had the chance to pass a “historic” immigration reform bill in 2013, but bottled it when his Tea Party colleagues threatened to unseat him. Time and again, he gave a minority bloc “a veto over the House” in order to save his own skin. His reward for this repeated cowardice? “They forced him out anyway.” Boehner lacked the “inspiration and combative spirit” to counter Obama's aggressive executive overreach, said **Jonathan Tobin** in *Commentary Magazine.com*. A better leader would have more clearly articulated the conservative position on key issues, and successfully convinced voters that the real reason for the shutdown confrontations was “Obama's intransigence.”

Boehner may not have been the speaker Republicans wanted, “but he was the speaker they needed,” said **Ezra Klein** in *Vox.com*. Handed the reins to a party “splitting itself apart,” he somehow managed to hold it together. He used the Tea Party's “lunacy as leverage” to extract trillions of dollars in spending cuts, “stopped Obama's legislative agenda cold,” and successfully built up “the largest House majority since the Truman presidency.” Boehner is “one of the best bad-hand players in Washington's politics,” said **Michael Brendan Dougherty** in *TheWeek.com*. “At a time of record disapproval ratings for Congress,” he led a congressional majority composed of politicians who won their seats “by promising to be utterly reckless.” That he achieved anything at all is practically a miracle.

What next?

The vote for the new speaker will take place on Oct. 8, said **Stephen Dinan** in *Washington Times.com*. This short time frame “likely ensures” that Kevin McCarthy will win the election, because “it give less time for opposition to develop.” But victory for the 50-year-old California lawmaker, who has spent nine years in the House and who would be the least experienced speaker since 1891, would prompt a potentially divisive fight over his current job as House majority leader. The “legislative stakes” are high, said **David Herszenhorn** and **Jonathan Martin** in *The New York Times*. This fall, Congress will have to vote on raising the debt ceiling, funding crucial highway programs, and keeping the government funded. As Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-N.J.) put it, “November and December are going to be like Dante's *Inferno* around here.”

Good luck to his successor, said **Chris Cillizza** in *WashingtonPost.com*. Not only will the new speaker inevitably get caught between the party's establishment and Tea Party wings, he will also be stymied by new “institutional realities.” Earmarking, whereby party leaders were once able to gain lawmakers' support by handing out funding for pet projects, was eliminated in 2013. And now that conservative organizations can pour campaign funds directly into politicians' coffers, there's no financial incentive for lawmakers to stay loyal to party leaders. The speaker's job has become “almost impossible.”

Putin wades into the Syria morass

What happened

Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his country's first airstrikes in Syria this week in a bid to prop up his embattled ally, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, adding further volatility to a bloody sectarian war that has already drawn in the U.S. and other world powers. At least 36 people died when Russian jets pounded targets near the central city of Homs, with Moscow claiming the attacks hit sites held by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. But U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said ISIS probably has no presence in Homs, and that the strikes targeted other rebel groups fighting Assad's regime. Russia's intervention on behalf of the Syrian government, he said, "is tantamount to pouring gasoline on the fire."



Putin and Obama: Not seeing eye to eye

The bombings came just days after a tense encounter between Putin and President Obama at the United Nations General Assembly. In dueling addresses to the assembled heads of state, the leaders offered starkly different solutions to the war in Syria, which has claimed 250,000 lives and sent millions of refugees flooding into neighboring countries and on to Europe. Obama said that peace would come only with the departure of Assad, "who drops barrel bombs to massacre innocent civilians" and whose brutality has fueled the rise of extremist groups in the country. In rebuttal, Putin said Assad represented stability and that his forces needed help in defeating ISIS. "We think it's an enormous mistake to refuse to cooperate with the Syrian government," he said, "and its armed forces who are valiantly fighting terrorism face-to-face."

What the editorials said

President Obama "has spent the past seven years leading from behind," said the *Boston Herald*, and the chaos in Syria shows the failure of his approach. Dithering as usual, our commander in chief was blindsided this week when Putin announced a new pact with Iran, Iraq, and the Syrian regime, which will see the countries share intelligence on ISIS. Now the Russian has the upper hand—after all, "in a world where might does indeed make right, who's going to get respect?"

Obama's restrained approach in Syria might not satisfy our desire for gung ho heroics, said *Newsday*, but his "long-term strategy is likely to be the most beneficial to the United States." Putting American boots on the ground in Syria will only result in "another Iraq- or Vietnam-style quagmire." If Putin wants to repeat the Soviet Union's misadventures in Afghanistan, "that's his folly."

What the columnists said

If Obama has any realistic plan to end the Syria debacle, he didn't offer it at the U.N., said Benny Avni in the *New York Post*. Coalition air attacks haven't slowed the rise of ISIS, and a \$500 million program to train moderate rebels has yielded only a handful of fighters. Now Putin has seized the initiative, and after more bloodshed, "our next president will be called on to retake the leadership baton from him. And that could prove tricky."

Putin's Syria gambit is about projecting strength at home, said Anne Applebaum in *The Washington Post*. Though it's tempting to lapse into a Cold War mentality and imagine him a global force and a successor to titans like Lenin and Stalin, Putin lacks the military muscle to shape Middle East events. But as Russians buckle under economic sanctions and plunging oil prices, he can distract them by pretending "Russia is regaining its place in the world." He'll give "the appearance of influence, and that's all that matters."

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"Putin stupidly went into Syria looking for a cheap sugar high," said Thomas Friedman in *The New York Times*. "Well, now he's up a tree." We should just leave him hanging there awhile "and watch him become public enemy No. 1 in the Sunni Muslim world." Still, we should all be worried by Putin's buildup in Syria, said David Axe in *TheDailyBeast.com*. Many of the warplanes and missile systems Russia has deployed in the country in recent weeks are only good for fighting other aircraft. ISIS doesn't have an air force. But we do. Could some event—say, a missile accidentally launched at an American plane—cause the U.S. and Russia to engage each other? "Don't pretend for a moment" that the terrifying prospect hasn't occurred to both Moscow and Washington.

It wasn't all bad

■ When deputy Brian Bussell saw Tierra Gray and her two young sons asleep in an Ohio sheriff's office waiting room, he knew something was wrong. Gray told Bussell that they'd been evicted from their home. Eager to help, the bighearted cop tried to find the family a space in a shelter, but soon discovered they were all full. So Bussell booked the family into a hotel for 10 nights and bought them clothes, shoes, and toiletries at a Walmart—all on his own dime. "He's the best," said Gray's 8-year-old son, Ziare. "He's like a friend to me."

■ Eugene Bostick has rescued so many stray dogs, he's had to build a special train to cart them around his Texas farm. The former railroad worker has been caring for abandoned pooches for more than 30 years and used to transport them in a tractor-trailer. When his pack became too big for the trailer,



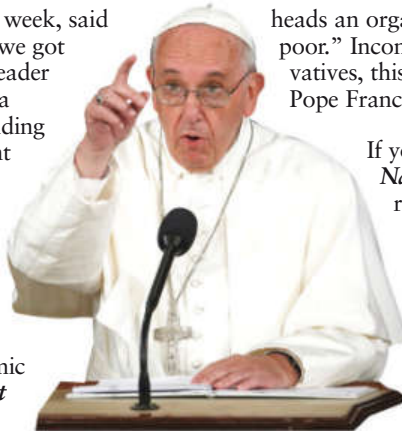
All aboard the dog train.

Bostick, 80, built a set of doggy train "cars" out of plastic barrels mounted on wheels, and he now drives his nine dogs around the neighborhood for an hour, twice a week. "Whenever [the dogs] hear me hooking the tractor up to it, man, they get so excited," he said. "They all come running and jump in."

■ Emma Lynam can't read or write, but she hasn't let that hold her back. The 21-year-old Australian, who has Down syndrome, hearing loss, and autism, has always loved using paper shredders. So with the help of her mother, Jo, she set up a business called "Master Shredder," shredding confidential documents for companies that don't want anybody reading their paperwork. Lynam now has four regular clients, including a credit union and a law firm, and is passionate about her job. She's "making a difference in her own life," said her mother. "Making her way like any other 21-year-old."

Papal visit: Did Pope Francis get too political?

Pope Francis was supposed to visit the U.S. last week, said **John Podhoretz** in the *New York Post*. Instead, we got someone who sounded “less like a theological leader and more like the 8 p.m. host on MSNBC.” In a weeklong series of high-profile addresses—including one to the United Nations and another to a joint meeting of Congress—Francis delighted liberals by praising President Obama’s policies on the environment, Cuba, and Iran; calling for an open-borders immigration policy; and urging an end to the death penalty. He offered only the mildest criticisms of same-sex marriage and abortion. Since his election two years ago, Francis has made no secret of his liberal economic views, said **Daniel Henninger** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Still, it was dispiriting to watch a spiritual leader of such eminence lower himself to the grubby “battlegrounds of secular politics,” allowing the papacy’s “moral authority to be politicized” for the short-term gain of the American left.



A pontiff liberals can love

heads an organization whose central tenet is “Be nice to the poor.” Inconveniently for most Bible-thumping U.S. conservatives, this anti-capitalist hippie rhetoric began “not with Pope Francis, but with Jesus Christ.”

If you listened carefully, said **George Weigel** in *NationalReview.com*, there was plenty in Francis’ remarks to make liberals squirm. The same compassion we should be showing immigrants, he said, we should also show to “human life at every stage of its development,” including the unborn. At the U.N., he said we have a duty to care for the poor, but only if they’re “dignified agents of their own destiny,” not dependents of the welfare state. And he met privately with Kim Davis, the Kentucky county clerk who was jailed for five days for refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. If liberals want to claim Francis as their own, let them do so, said **Peggy Noonan** in *The Wall Street Journal*. After 30 of years being “frustrated and depressed” by the last two popes, maybe it’s just “their turn.”

Popes have always been political, said **Molly Ball** in *TheAtlantic.com*, and Francis’ views—on poverty, the environment, war, and abortion—are squarely in line with those of his predecessors. What makes him different, and conservatives irate, is in how he views the role of the state. To Francis, governments have a moral duty to combat global threats like wealth inequality and climate change, while he sees decisions about sex and marriage and procreation as profound moral choices better left to individuals. “Francis is not an American politician, but his perspective on the state’s role in these issues lines up pretty well with that of most American Democrats.” Nobody should be surprised to discover the pope is a radical liberal, said **Fareed Zakaria** in *The Washington Post*. He

“Why do we care whose side the pope is on?” said **Matt Taibbi** in *RollingStone.com*. The year is 2015. Like Christianity in general, Catholicism is in steady decline here in America—down to around 20 percent of the population in one recent poll—meaning that for 80 percent of us, maybe more, the pope is “just a guy in a funny hat.” Tell that to the huge crowds and millions of Americans inspired by Francis’ humility and Christian love, said **Ross Douthat** in *NYTimes.com*. It says something encouraging about our national character that even those on the left, who can often seem so “secular and scoffing,” get suddenly very excited at the thought of “a blessing from the heir to the apostles.”

Only in America

■ A California high school student who defended a blind classmate from a bully ended up being suspended for fighting. Video of the incident showed Cody Pines, 17, decking the bully and chastising him for beating up the visually impaired student. More than 80,000 people signed an online petition in support of Pines, who was suspended under the school’s zero-tolerance policy against violence.

■ Springfield, Mo., last month updated its indecent exposure laws to require women to cover a greater percentage of their breasts in public, in response to “Free the Nipple” rallies organized by local feminists. The law also requires that both sexes “cover 100 percent of their buttocks.” A provision barring the display of “covered male genitals in a discernibly turgid state” was removed from the final law.

Good week for:

Pencil necks, after British researchers discovered that, pound for pound, bodybuilders’ muscles are weaker than those of people who don’t pump iron. Weight lifters are only strong, scientists said, because they have so much muscle mass, which compensates for their poor muscle quality.

“You’re it,” after a Washington school district lifted its ban on playing tag during recess following lobbying by parents. School officials in Mercer Island said they had prohibited the game to ensure students’ “physical and emotional safety.”

Holy water, after Rep. Bob Brady (D-Pa.) stole a half-full glass of water that Pope Francis drank from during his address to Congress, and used the water to “bless” his staff and family.

Bad week for:

Emergency bathroom breaks, after a passenger on Dutch airline KLM was arrested for allegedly trying to open the plane’s door at 30,000 feet. James Gray said he mistook the exit for the restroom, adding, “I realize the danger of that sort of thing.”

Scientific outreach, after conservative pundit Rush Limbaugh declared that NASA’s recent discovery of flowing water on Mars was likely part of an ongoing plot to advance a “leftist agenda” that has “something to do with global warming.”

Rummaging, after a Florida woman found an 8-foot, 40-pound Burmese python dozing among a pile of clothes at a flea market. “It was looking for a cozy place to digest its meal,” said a fireman who removed the snake.

Boring but important

Keystone company’s delay tactics

The Canadian company behind the long-disputed Keystone XL pipeline moved this week to stall the official review process—hoping that a potential Republican administration might approve the pipeline in 2017. Until now, TransCanada Corp. had been pursuing legal bids to seize land in Nebraska for the 1,179-mile pipeline, which would run from Alberta’s oil sands to refineries in Texas. But the company will now drop those challenges and submit to Nebraska’s state review process, which it had resisted. While that state’s review is ongoing, the Obama administration’s review of the project is unlikely to be completed. President Obama has indicated he might reject the pipeline; every GOP presidential candidate, by contrast, supports the project.

Seattle

Duck boat tragedy: A fifth person died this week from injuries sustained in a crash between a bus and an amphibious “duck boat” in Seattle, not long after the National



Scene of the accident

Transportation Safety Board revealed that the 1945 military-style vessel hadn't received an axle repair recommended back in 2013. The crash occurred on the city's Aurora Bridge last week, when the duck boat appeared to “lurch suddenly,” according to a witness. “[I saw] what appeared to be the front left wheel pop off,” said Jesse Christenson. “And then it clipped a smaller SUV and basically almost T-boned into the oncoming bus.” Amphibious-boat tours are offered around the world, but critics say the WWII-era vehicles aren't suited for city roads. Authorities have suspended Seattle's duck-boat fleet while they investigate the cause of the crash and whether tour operator Ride the Ducks of Seattle ignored the recommended fix.

El Paso, Texas

Abortion battle: An El Paso abortion clinic that closed last year reopened its doors this week, as the U.S. Supreme Court met behind closed doors over whether to hear a challenge to a tough 2013 Texas law that led to the facility's closure. The Reproductive Services clinic didn't meet the surgical standards required under the 2013 state law, which was famously filibustered for 12 hours by then-Democratic State Senator Wendy Davis. The law also required that doctors who perform abortions have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital. About half of the state's 41 abortion clinics closed in the wake of the legislation, but in June, the Supreme Court temporarily blocked the restrictions while it decides whether to hear an appeal of a lower court ruling that upheld the legislation. If the justices accept the challenge, it will be the biggest abortion case to reach the Supreme Court in decades.



Washington, D.C.

Planned Parenthood clash:

The head of Planned Parenthood sparred with Republican lawmakers this week during a



Richards: “Smear campaign” contentious five-hour congressional hearing on the women's organization—the first since the release in July of a series of undercover videos showing employees calmly discussing the use of post-abortion fetal tissue. During heated questioning, House Oversight Committee Chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) accused Planned Parenthood President Cecile Richards of wasting federal funds provided to the organization on “lavish” parties and her six-figure salary. “That's money that's not going to women's health care,” said Chaffetz. Richards denied what she called the “outrageous accusations” that Planned Parenthood had profited from the sale of fetal tissue, and accused Republican lawmakers of using heavily edited videos to advance a “smear campaign” against the group.

AP; Landov, Jeff Maier, AP

Jackson, Ga.

Execution goes forward: The only woman on Georgia's death row, Kelly Gissendaner, was executed this week after a parole board ignored Pope Francis' plea for clemency on her behalf. Gissendaner was sentenced to death in 1998 for arranging to have her husband killed by her lover, Greg Owen, who stabbed Doug Gissendaner to death. Religious groups had long opposed her death sentence on the grounds that Gissendaner did not personally carry out the murder, and her legal team had filed three appeals to the U.S. Supreme Court—all of which were denied. Gissendaner's children and the pope appealed to the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles to spare Gissendaner's life, but the requests were rejected. Gissendaner, 47, was executed via lethal injection, and sang “Amazing Grace” as the drugs were administered. She was the first female prisoner to be executed in Georgia in 70 years.

Washington Township, N.J.

Quarterback dies: A New Jersey high school quarterback died last week from severe abdominal injuries, having collapsed in the middle of a game after taking a hard tackle. Evan Murray, 17, from Warren Hills Regional High School, was playing in Washington Township when he fell to the ground after a particularly hard hit; he hobbled off the field with the help of teammates, but collapsed on the sidelines shortly after. He was pronounced dead at the hospital, having suffered a massive intra-abdominal hemorrhage caused by a lacerated spleen. A Morris County medical examiner's office report found that Murray's spleen was “abnormally enlarged,” making it more susceptible to injury. Teammates said Murray had taken several hard tackles throughout the game. He was the third U.S. teen to die in September from injuries suffered on a football field.



Murray

Miami

Jeb in trouble? Jeb Bush's campaign team this week moved to reassure top Republican donors that the former Florida governor is still a viable presidential candidate, as Bush slipped to fifth place in the GOP pack in the latest NBC News/



Jeb's donors are getting jittery.

Wall Street Journal poll. Following a lackluster performance in the second GOP presidential debate, the former Republican front-runner now lags behind three outsider candidates—Donald Trump, Carly Fiorina, and Ben Carson—as well as his former protégée and establishment rival, Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.). Major fundraisers have warned Bush they will defect to Rubio and others if he fails to regain some ground within the next few weeks. The panic level within Bush's team has hit a “6 or 7,” according to one major donor, who spoke with *Politico.com* after meeting with the former governor's campaign advisers in Miami. “Things don't look really good right now,” said another.



Rage against the cereal café

\$5 for a bowl of cereal—as a symbol of the neighborhood's rapid gentrification. "We've got death threats, people calling every day saying 'Die, hipsters,' all that kind of stuff," said manager Matt Moncrieff. The café's owners, brothers Gary and Alan Keery, have defended their right to open a business on Brick Lane, a street once famous for its population of immigrants and artists but now known for its soaring rents and posh boutiques.

Guadalajara, Mexico

American fugitive nabbed: Mexican authorities and the U.S. Marshals Service have caught an American who was on the run for 24 years after allegedly kidnapping, raping, and torturing two women in Portland, Ore. Paul Jackson, 45, and his half brother were charged in 1990 but went on the lam when their mother bailed them out before their trial. The half brother surrendered in 2006 and is serving a 108-year sentence. After Jackson's case was featured on CNN's *The Hunt With John Walsh*, a tipster pointed authorities to Guadalajara, where they found Jackson this week living under an assumed name. One victim, Andrea Hood, who escaped the brothers' house in 1990 after 36 hours of repeated sexual assaults, said she could now start to heal.

Barcelona

Separatists in slim win: Catalonia is a step closer to breaking away from Spain. Voters in Spain's wealthiest region have given a majority of seats in the provincial parliament to a coalition of separatists, and the new leaders say they will begin an 18-month process of secession. "Catalans have voted yes to independence," said jubilant separatist leader Artur Mas of the Together for Yes party. Still, the separatists did not get an outright majority of the popular vote, winning 47.9 percent, and the central government in Madrid said it would oppose any unilateral Catalan actions. This week, a court summoned Mas to face accusations of civil disobedience and abuse of power for holding a symbolic referendum on independence last year.



Mas: Secessionist

Tegucigalpa, Honduras

Rooting out corruption: In a victory for protesters, Honduras is getting an international corruption investigation like the one that recently prompted the ouster of the president in neighboring Guatemala. Since May, Hondurans have been taking to the streets to demand an investigation into President Juan Orlando Hernández, who has admitted that his election campaign received financing from people linked to an embezzlement scandal but has denied personal involvement in the scam. The Organization of American States will supervise the investigation. In Guatemala, former President Otto Pérez Molina is currently in jail and facing charges of bribe taking after a similar anti-corruption probe organized by the United Nations.



Demanding a president's resignation

Berlin

Refugees warehoused: With 170,000 migrants pouring into the country in a single month, Germany has had to waive its housing standards to accommodate them all. Each refugee is now entitled to 75 square feet of space, less than the space required under German law to kennel a dog. Human rights groups said the overcrowding is causing unrest. In one refugee tent city, a brawl broke out involving up to 400 frustrated residents. "We can't offer any luxury and we don't want to offer any luxury," said Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière. "Of course a gym with hundreds of people in it isn't nice, but it's better than no roof over the head."



A gym turned shelter



Bogotá, Colombia

Closing in on peace: Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and leaders from the leftist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) have signed a breakthrough peace agreement that lays out a final accord, to be clinched in six months. FARC, considered a terrorist group by the U.S., has battled the Colombian government since the 1960s in a guerrilla war that has claimed 220,000 lives, and it controls much of the cocaine trade. Under the truth-and-reconciliation-style deal, FARC militants will receive community service sentences instead of prison terms if they admit their crimes before an international tribunal and pay damages. Members of the Colombian military and civil society will also have to answer to the tribunal, and some Colombians say that this provision draws a false equivalence between terrorists and the military. Most, however, greeted news of the pact with hope and relief.

Al-Wahga, Yemen

Wedding bombed: At least 130 people, including dozens of women and children, were killed in a Saudi airstrike that hit a wedding party in rural Yemen this week, Yemeni officials said. The U.S.-backed, Saudi-led coalition denied conducting any airstrikes in the area, just as it has denied responsibility for other strikes that have killed large numbers of civilians. The coalition has been bombarding the Houthis—Shiite rebels supported by Iran—since the militia took over much of Yemen last spring. Human rights groups say the coalition has frequently hit nonmilitary targets, and the United Nations reports that more than half of the 4,500 people killed so far in the conflict have been civilians.



After the airstrike

Kunduz, Afghanistan

Americans back in combat: U.S. troops were engaged in fierce firefights with Taliban fighters near Kunduz this week, after the militant group took over the regional capital—its first capture of a major city since 2001. With Afghan forces struggling to launch a counteroffensive, U.S. warplanes conducted airstrikes, and about 100 U.S. special operations forces fought off Taliban militants trying to storm Kunduz Airport. “This was done out of self-defense,” said Col. Brian Tribus, a spokesman for the U.S. and NATO missions in Afghanistan. “When they encountered the threat, they defended themselves.” U.S. troops remaining in Afghanistan are there only to advise and train Afghans, but are allowed to fight if threatened. The fall of Kunduz was a shock to the U.S.-led coalition and the Afghan government. Afghan troops and police in the area numbered around 7,000, while the Taliban force was fewer than 1,000.



Afghan special forces near Kunduz

Sargodha, Pakistan

Outcry over execution: Pakistani authorities have hanged a man who was said to be a child at the time he was accused of murder. Ansar Iqbal was arrested 16 years ago for the murder of a neighbor, and he always maintained that police were bribed to frame him. At the time of the killing, police said Iqbal was in his 20s, and he was sentenced to death. But during his appeal, his lawyers produced school records and a birth certificate that indicated he was either 14 or 15 at the time of the crime, which would make him ineligible for the death penalty. The court refused to consider the documents, saying they were submitted too late.

Kathmandu, Nepal

Indian blockade: Still struggling with shortages of basic goods after April's deadly earthquake, Nepal was forced to begin gas rationing this week after supplies of food, medicine, and fuel from India abruptly stopped. Nepalese authorities said India had started a blockade in retaliation for a new Nepalese constitution that fails to give special rights to the Madhesi, an ethnic Indian group. India said there was no embargo but that its drivers were afraid to cross the border because of violent Madhesi protests. Nearly half of Nepal's imported goods enter the country via a single mountain pass, and a line of trucks waiting on the Indian side snaked for a mile. After Nepalese authorities complained, a few trucks began crossing, but Nepalese officials said they contained food that had already rotted.



Nepalese protest the embargo.

Bangui, Central African Republic

Muslims vs. Christians: Thousands of people fled their homes as sectarian fighting killed dozens in the Central African Republic this week, raising fears of a return to civil war just two weeks ahead of a presidential election. The clashes started when a taxi driver was found dead in the capital of Bangui, and rumors spread that his body was mutilated with slogans that showed he was killed because he was Muslim. Vigilante Muslim groups battled Christians, and United Nations peacekeeping troops struggled to restore order. “With numerous reports of rival armed groups gathering in the provinces and Bangui, we fear the situation could escalate,” said U.N. refugee agency spokesman Leo Dobbs.



U.N. troops try to restore order.

Canberra, Australia

Banning U.S. pop star: Australian authorities said this week they would probably deny a visa to American rapper Chris Brown because of his conviction for domestic assault. Brown pleaded guilty in 2009 to beating up his then girlfriend, the singer Rihanna. He is scheduled to tour Australia in December, but authorities notified him this week that he has 28 days to appeal before a visa is officially denied. “There are going to be countries that say to you, ‘You cannot come in because you are not of the character that we expect,’” said Minister for Women Michaelia Cash. Canada and Britain have also refused Brown entry.



Brown: Unwelcome

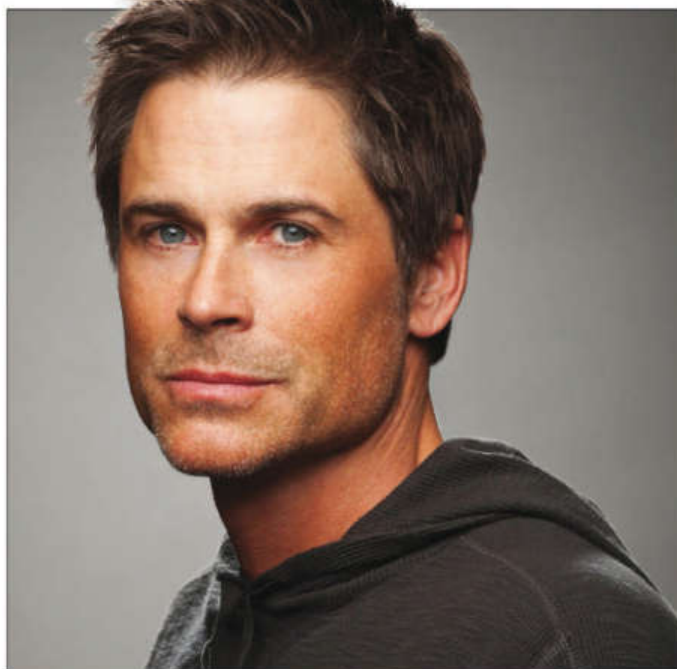
Life as C-3PO



Anthony Daniels has one of the most recognizable voices in Hollywood, said Ryan Gilbey in *The Guardian* (U.K.). But back in 1977, when the then little-known English radio actor was first offered the role of a finicky, anxious robot in an American sci-fi movie, he thought the idea sounded ghastly. "I was so negative about the whole thing. Why would I want to be involved with this rubbish?" But then the director, George Lucas, showed him a drawing of his character, C-3PO. "The droid had a kind of bleak, forlorn emptiness. I felt as though he were asking me to come and help—to be his companion." Daniels has played C-3PO ever since, in all *Star Wars* films to date as well as in spin-off animations and computer games. He still loves the character, but admits that "sometimes I hear myself and think, 'Oh, shut up.' I recorded a C-3PO satnav, and they gave me one to keep. I was driving in France with it. My voice was saying to me: 'At the next roundabout, take the fifth exit...' and you know what? I really started to get on my nerves. It was weird because I didn't know where I was driving. And yet this other 'me' did. It was beyond surreal."

The man who took the first space walk

Alexei Leonov was the first person to walk in space—and it almost killed him, said Tom Whipple in *The Times* (U.K.). On March 18, 1965, the Russian cosmonaut stepped out of his spacecraft, 300 miles above Earth. "It was absolutely still. I heard the beating of my heart; I heard my heavy breath." Leonov's job was to determine whether it was possible for an astronaut to move around safely in open space. But eight minutes into his space walk, Leonov realized something was very wrong: His suit was gradually inflating. "I couldn't feel my boots anymore. I couldn't feel my gloves. I realized I was floating inside my suit." Soon his gloves were so swollen he couldn't bend his fingers. He had no choice but to expel the air in his spacesuit, risking suffocation or compression sickness. "The nitrogen in the blood begins to boil. I felt it starting; I felt the trembling in my fingers." He couldn't get back into the spacecraft's tight air lock the right way—feet first, in order to close the hatch—and had to go head first, and then turn around. "In 12 minutes I lost 13 pounds because of the sweating. I still don't know how I did it." Later, he gave his verdict. "I reported one sentence: 'If a man has a proper suit and proper training, he is able to work in open space.' That's it. End of report."



Lowe's hard lessons

Rob Lowe got sober through public humiliation, said Amy Wallace in *GQ*. The pretty boy of the 1980s "Brat Pack," Lowe spent his early 20s enjoying his fame and the attention of women in one long, seemingly endless party. "In those days, the pre-sobriety days, it was, like, all good," says Lowe, 51. "It was more in the ensuing years that you kind of look at the price of it." He paid the price in 1988, when a videotape emerged of Lowe, then 24 and high on drugs and alcohol, having sex with two young women—ages 16 and 22. Lowe's career came to a standstill, and he finally checked into rehab. He hasn't had a drink since. "People always say, 'How have you been sober 26 years? What's the secret? For someone in recovery like me, the single greatest hurdle—the No. 1 with a bullet that will make you drink—is resentment. You can't have it.'" Lowe never became the major Hollywood star he once imagined he'd be, but he's had a solid career and a good marriage. "If you would have asked me when I was 18 and one of the hot Young Turks on the scene what I wanted from my life," he says, "I would have wanted the lead in the next Martin Scorsese movie. Well, I didn't get it. I still haven't gotten it. But I wouldn't trade it for what I have."

Gossip

■ **Gwen Stefani** and **Blake Shelton** have been comforting each other in the wake of their respective divorces—and Shelton has fallen hard for the No Doubt singer, says *Life & Style*. Stefani, 45, announced she and husband Gavin Rossdale, 49, were separating in August, just weeks after the 39-year-old Shelton, her fellow judge on *The Voice*, announced his own divorce from Miranda Lambert, 31. Since then, the two have been enjoying "intimate lunches" and hanging out in each other's

dressing rooms. "[Blake has] even given her small gifts," said an insider. "He sees Gwen as the ultimate woman, and she has been reveling in the attention."

■ In an emotional interview with Oprah Winfrey, former child star **Danny Pintauro** has revealed he is HIV-positive and has been living with the secret for 12 years. Pintauro, 39, who is best known for playing Jonathan Bower in the 1980s sitcom *Who's the Boss?*, told Winfrey he was diagnosed in 2003, after a regular checkup. He was using crystal meth at the time, which he said made him sexually adventurous. "I was experimenting," said Pintauro. "And believe it or not, I thought that I was being safe." Pintauro said he kept quiet about his diagnosis because he wasn't ready to deal with the scrutiny involved, but admitted he always regretted

not using his fame to become a role model for other young gay men. "What I want my community to realize is we need to take better care of ourselves," he said.

■ Following a six-year legal battle, **Jennifer Lopez's** first husband has threatened to release a sex tape recorded during their honeymoon in 1997. Lopez has fought for years to keep the footage private, but her ex-husband, Cuban waiter Ojani Noa, now plans along with his business partner Ed Meyer to use a legal loophole to release the intimate footage—which Meyer says shows Lopez "with a lack of clothing and in sexual situations," as well as in an argument with her mother over her mom's gambling. The footage will "shock her friends," said Meyer. He's demanded \$3.75 million from Lopez to prevent the tape's release.



The Iran deal

Having survived Republican opposition in Congress, President Obama's nuclear deal with Iran will soon go into effect.

What does the deal do?

It significantly inhibits Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons, in exchange for relief from crippling economic sanctions. Forged over 20 months of intense negotiations among Iran, the U.S., and five other world powers, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is designed to block four possible pathways to the bomb for 10 to 15 years. Iran must relinquish 97 percent of its enriched uranium stockpiles; remove two-thirds of its 20,000 uranium-enriching centrifuges; rebuild its heavy-water reactor so that it cannot produce weapons-grade plutonium; and submit to ongoing, intrusive inspections. These measures are designed to increase Iran's "breakout time" to developing nuclear weapons from the current three months to at least a year. Republicans and Israel strongly opposed the deal, saying it does not guarantee that Iran won't cheat, and may only postpone the Islamic Republic's development of a nuclear weapon. But President Obama insisted that the choice was between a negotiated deal and war. "How can we in good conscience justify war," he asked, "before we've tested a diplomatic agreement?"

When does the deal go into effect?

It will formally be adopted on Oct. 19, but "implementation day" won't be until the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirms that Iran has complied with all its obligations. Every stage of Iran's nuclear-fuel supply chain—uranium mines and mills, enrichment plants, centrifuge factories—will be monitored by up to 150 IAEA inspectors, 24/7 video surveillance, and high-tech sensors. If Iran does cheat, said Aaron Stein, a nuclear nonproliferation expert, "the likelihood of getting caught is near 100 percent."

Can the inspectors go wherever they want?

No—and that's the key objection of the deal's critics. While inspectors will have unrestricted access to specified, existing nuclear facilities, they'll require Iranian permission to visit any other site—military or otherwise—they deem "suspicious." If Iran refuses, it will have 24 days to convince first the IAEA and then a special Western-majority U.N. panel—comprising the U.S., the U.K., France, Germany, the EU, Russia, China, and Iran itself—that its objections are valid. If five of the eight countries on that panel do not vote to support Iran, the U.N.'s sanctions will automatically "snap back" into place. Critics say this 24-day period gives the regime ample time to cover up evi-



Kerry, left, listening to Zarif during the talks

dence of any illicit activity. The deal's defenders argue that no nation would agree to "anytime, anywhere" inspections throughout its territory unless it had been conquered militarily.

Will the sanctions snap back?

The U.S. has majority support on the special panel, so Iran cannot be bailed out by its traditional backers, China and Russia. It is therefore likely that cheating will result in the reimposition of sanctions. But Mark Dubowitz of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a conservative think tank, argues that the

Obama administration, and perhaps following administrations, will only take that step if "massive" Iranian violations are discovered. "You're certainly not going to risk engaging in nuclear escalation over smaller violations," Dubowitz says.

Is Iran likely to violate the deal?

The Islamic Republic does have a long history of deception and obfuscation. U.S. intelligence believes the regime was secretly pursuing the development of a nuclear weapon until 2003. In 2006, sanctions were imposed amid reports the country wasn't complying with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Iran has also refused to allow the IAEA to inspect the Parchin military facility for evidence of past nuclear activity—instead, in what critics called a "selfie inspection," Iranian officials collected dirt and air samples themselves under IAEA observation. But now that Iran has gotten sanctions relief, cheating would be a high-risk gamble that could cost Iran hundreds of billions of dollars a year in revenues. The dropping of sanctions should double Iran's oil exports, and provide an immediate windfall of up to \$150 billion.

What happens when the deal expires?

That's unknown. Iran could race to build a bomb within months and dare the West and Israel to respond, or a new deal could be negotiated. Obama's hope is that over 15 years, the fundamentalist Islamic hard-liners' grip on Iran will loosen, and that the country will come to see that global integration is preferable to isolation. In the short term, defenders argue, half a loaf is better than none. "If I knew for certain that in five years they would cheat or renege, I'd still take the deal," says Gary Samore, the former president of the group United Against Nuclear Iran, who became a supporter of the accord when he saw its details. "We will have bought a couple of years, and if Iran cheats or reneges we will be in an even better position to double down on sanctions or, if necessary, use military force."

Some very personal diplomacy

The long negotiations in Austria and Switzerland that led to the deal were a roller-coaster ride of conflicting agendas, growing personal friendship, and explosions of anger. On one occasion, recounts Robin Wright in *The New Yorker*, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif announced he was leaving, then "sat on a chair against a wall and put his head in his hands." Later that day, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry slammed his hand on the table so hard it sent a pen flying into the air, and it hit one of the Iranians. During another impasse, a Kerry staffer had to warn the two men that their shouting could be heard from down the hotel corridor. But the two men also developed a rapport. When Kerry broke his leg cycling, Zarif was among the first to contact him to express his sympathy. The two teams ate together—Persian food—for the first time shortly before the deal was struck; both Kerry and Zarif commiserated about the pressures they were receiving from home. In their final meeting, the diplomats sent their aides out of the room, and hammered out the final details alone. "All of the mistrust that has been there for these decades remains," said a State Department official. "But it fights against the fact that we've spent two years getting to know each other."

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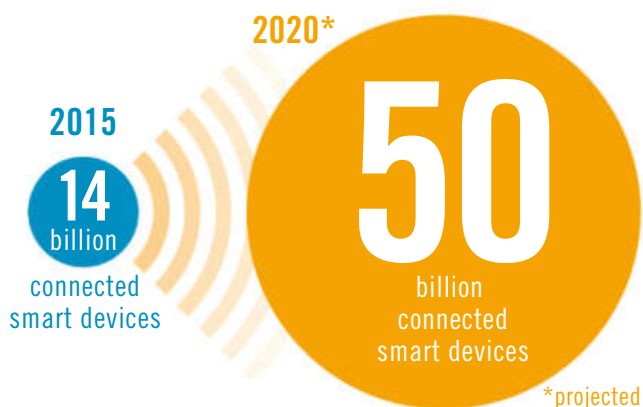


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What Trump's tax plan reveals

James Pethokoukis
TheWeek.com

Donald Trump's tax plan may be "ludicrous," said James Pethokoukis, but it proves he "is actually serious about capturing the Republican presidential nomination." The Republican front-runner's tax plan, released this week, looks like he took Jeb Bush's tax plan and decided, "We should do this, but make it more tremendous!" Trump would cut the top tax rate from 39.6 percent to 25 percent (Bush has proposed 28 percent), lower the corporate tax rate to 15 percent, and free 75 million Americans from paying any income tax whatsoever. Even the estate tax on large inheritances would go to zero. Bush's plan would cost the federal treasury more than \$3 trillion over a decade, but Trump's would cost about \$10 trillion. No amount of economic growth or loophole closing could make up for the massive deficits it would cause. But as tax-hating Grover Norquist pointed out, virtually every Republican in Congress would vote for such "tax reform." So here's the art of Trump's presidential deal: "mass deportations" for the nativist base and tax cuts for the rich and everybody else. What's not to like?

Drug laws didn't fill the prisons

David Brooks
The New York Times

Everyone agrees that "far too many Americans are stuck behind bars," said David Brooks. But the conventional wisdom about the cause of this destructive problem is "largely wrong"—and thus, so are the proposed solutions. The war on drugs is not the primary cause of this era of mass incarceration. Only 17 percent of inmates in state prisons are there for a drug-related offense, and that percentage is steadily dropping. If you released every drug offender in state prison, you'd only reduce the prison population from 1.5 million to 1.2 million. Mandatory sentences aren't the cause, either, according to new research: Only 10 percent of current inmates are serving more than seven years, and roughly half have terms of two to three years. So why are prisons so full? Partly, it might be prosecutors aggressively seeking felony charges and prison terms, rather than plea bargains, to show their "toughness." Partly, it may be that people who once wound up in mental institutions now wind up in prison. To reduce prison populations, no simple solution will do: It will require "economic, familial, psychological, and social repair."

Why voters have soured on governors

Jeff Greenfield
Politico.com

Governors used to be the most credible presidential candidates—but not in today's Republican Party, said Jeff Greenfield. Since 1976, every general election but one has "featured at least one sitting or former governor," and four were elected president: Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush. Unlike congressmen and senators, state governors can rightfully boast of knowing how to run a government, balance a budget, and "get things done." Yet in this electoral cycle, two candidates with governing experience, Scott Walker and Rick Perry, have already pulled out, while four others—Chris Christie, Mike Huckabee, John Kasich, and Jeb Bush—are polling in single digits. How come? Republican voters have come to see government as "the source of all political evil," so *any* experience in governing is now "a disqualifying factor." Instead of experienced political leaders who will achieve incremental progress, conservatives want a crusader untainted by compromise, who will battle the "enemy"—whatever the cost. It's no longer sufficient to say, "I'm not from Washington." To run for president, you cannot be "from anywhere in the known political universe."

Viewpoint

"Mars doesn't want anything to do with human visitors. Just think of all the ways it's dreamed up to kill us. If it's not the bitter cold, it's the lethal radiation; if not the radiation, it's the thin, poisonous atmosphere. That's part of the appeal of Mars in the first place—and part of almost all outrageous acts of exploration. Show us the second-tallest mountain in the world and we want to climb it. Show us the tallest and we need to. The lure of Mars endures, but for today's NASA, it is an eventual goal that remains just over the next 15- or 20-year horizon—which, like all horizons, recedes and recedes eternally. America squints at where it wants to go, gripes about the length of the walk and the cost of the shoes, then slumps off to see a good Mars movie instead."

Jeffrey Kluger in Time

It must be true... I read it in the tabloids

■ A Michigan driver with a phobia about spiders sparked a raging fire at a gas station when he tried to kill one of the critters with a cigarette lighter. Security footage showed the man filling up his car and then peering inside the fuel door and asking, "Is that a spider in there?" When he ignited his lighter, a blaze suddenly engulfed the car, the pump and, presumably, the spider. The driver put out the flames with a nearby fire extinguisher and returned to the gas station the next day to apologize. "He was sorry," said a clerk. "It's just one of those things that happen—stupidity."

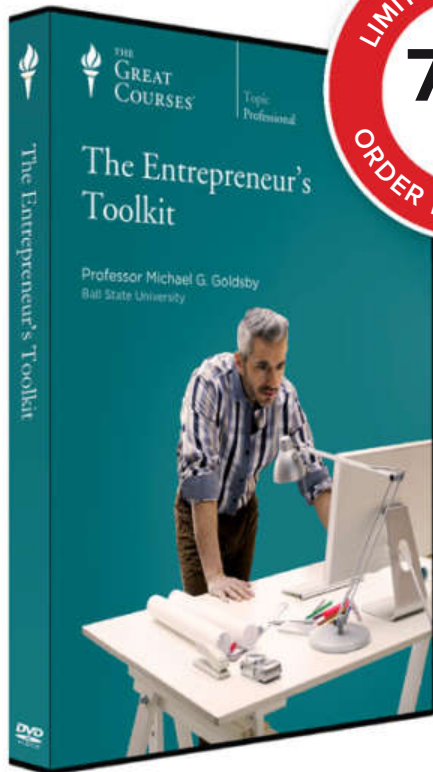
■ Doctors have warned that the hipster "man bun" hairstyle popularized by Jared Leto and Leonardo DiCaprio could be causing an epidemic of premature baldness. When men yank their hair back in a tight bun, they put a damaging strain on follicles around their hairline, which can result in a form of hair loss known as traction alopecia, explained Dr. Sabra Sullivan, a dermatologist. "I see [the condition] probably once or twice a week now," she said, warning that if hipsters feel they have to have a bun, they should wear it loose. "You don't want to go for hair transplants later."

■ A California man got much more than he expected when he opened his delivery from Domino's: \$1,300 in cash. Instead of the chicken wings he expected, Mike Vegas found two thick stacks of cash inside the box, one containing \$666, the other \$633. Vegas called the driver, who had meant to take the money-filled box to the bank. Domino's rewarded Vegas with a year of free pizza. "Honest people are hard to find these days," said a Domino's manager.





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SWITZERLAND

The upside of taking in more Muslims

Pierre Micheletti
Le Temps

If we want to persuade Europeans to accept hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees, we'll have to tell them what's in it for them, said Pierre Micheletti. Compassion, easily awakened by photos of dead children, "soon reaches its limit" once the crowds of desperate people actually arrive, dressed in foreign garb and speaking Arabic or other tongues. That's why European leaders should tell their electorates that these refugees from Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere have something crucial to offer Western society: They can "bear witness to the atrocities" wrought by radical Islam. Europeans are already panicked over the trend toward home-

grown jihadism. Germany, France, Denmark, and the U.K. have seen hundreds of their Muslim youth heed the call of ISIS and travel to Syria and Iraq for terrorist training. Every country fears another jihadist strike on European soil like the January attack on the *Charlie Hebdo* office in Paris. The refugees can help prevent such a tragedy. As they mix with our own Muslim populations, they will report the horrors of life under the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, the terrible injustices perpetrated in the name of a warped view of religion. They will provide "a natural vaccine" against Islamist fundamentalism. That's a shot in the arm Europe needs.

UNITED KINGDOM

Sent to war, trained to kill, then punished

Sarah Vine
The Daily Mail

A British Royal Marine is serving life in prison for the misfortune of being caught on camera during wartime, said Sarah Vine. No one can deny that Sgt. Alexander Blackman did a repugnant thing. Standing over a mortally wounded Taliban fighter, Blackman snarled, "Shuffle off this mortal coil, you c---. It's nothing you wouldn't do to us." He then shot the man point-blank in the chest. The 2011 incident was filmed by another soldier, and once back home, Blackman was convicted of murder. Of course our marines are not supposed to execute enemy prisoners, even dying ones. "But if ever there were a case for extenuating

circumstances" to be considered, this is it. Blackman's unit was just finishing a horrific Afghan tour, having lost seven comrades. They'd seen "dismembered body parts displayed like trophies" and found the mutilated body of a tortured British soldier. Is it any wonder Blackman's rage overcame him? Soldiers are trained to kill, remember, and they can't do that unless they come to think of the enemy as less than human. Blackman committed manslaughter, yes. But if we lock him away forever as a murderer, we dishonor all our soldiers—the people we ask to do terrible things in our name.

Germany: Has VW ruined 'Made in Germany'?

The Volkswagen cheating scandal has dirtied the good name of German industry, said Henning Peitsmeier in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (Germany). U.S. regulators recently discovered that the auto giant had been installing special software in its supposedly clean-diesel cars so it could cheat on emissions tests. The software would detect when the cars were being tested in a lab and then turn emissions controls on; out on the road, the cars belched higher levels of pollutants. This is an egregious betrayal of VW's customers, and because VW is a flagship German company, the "Made in Germany"

brand itself is tarnished. German engineering is supposed to be the highest standard of reliability, but now the phrase is synonymous with deceit and pollution. VW's stock price has fallen more than 35 percent and dragged the entire Frankfurt stock exchange down with it. We could see a terrifying domino effect. More than 200 German firms are directly dependent on supplying Volkswagen, and many more firms are dependent on them.

Other European nations can be excused for wanting to "gloat for a moment," said Mark Almond in the *Mail on Sunday* (U.K.). Germans love to boast of their precision, their attention to detail, their impeccable adherence to the rules, and now they've been caught brazenly flouting the law. But "this is no time for schadenfreude." Germany is already grappling with mass immigration it can't afford. If this industrial scandal ends up plunging the country into economic crisis, Germany could



It'll take more than a little polish to repair VW's reputation.

experience a surge "in dangerous nationalism"—and we all know how that story ends.

Let's not get apocalyptic, said Stefan Kaiser in *Der Spiegel* (Germany). This is "hardly the beginning of the collapse of the German economy." VW cheated, just as many companies from many countries have done in the past. But Volkswagen's wrongdoing doesn't implicate every other German firm. When Toyota had a huge auto recall, nobody stopped buying products from Sony or other Japanese companies. While trust in the

VW leadership may be affected, trust in German workmanship shouldn't be. In fact, you could argue that "VW's trickery was actually a brilliant example of engineering."

Nice try, said Thomas Fricke in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany). In fact, even a small hit to Germany's reputation could have massive consequences for the economy. Andrew Rose, an economist at the University of California at Berkeley, has found that when a country's global popularity dips by 1 percent, its exports fall 0.5 percent. So if VW's cheating causes enough foreigners to view Germany as a bad-faith actor, "we could quickly see losses in the tens of billions of dollars." The good news, though, is that a nation's image can improve as quickly as it plunges—just look at how President Obama restored America's good name after the wars and torture scandals of the George W. Bush era. Maybe we should "appoint Obama head of VW."

Saudi Arabia: Who's to blame for hajj tragedy?

The death toll at this year's hajj proves that Saudi Arabia's management of the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca "is thoroughly incompetent," said *Jomhuri Eslami* (Iran) in an editorial. More than 1,100 pilgrims were killed, including more than 200 Iranians, and another 900 injured in a stampede last week when two massive crowds of worshippers going in opposite directions converged on a narrow street. Many pilgrims were crushed to death, others asphyxiated in the stifling heat, and white-gowned bodies were left piled up in the road. Some reports accused Saudi police of creating a fatal bottleneck by closing a road to allow the Saudi crown prince's motorcade to pass. Others said "internal disputes in the House of Saud" between the Defense and Interior ministries resulted in too few security personnel being on duty to guide the pilgrims.

In fact, the Saudis were too busy killing other Muslims to police the hajj, said *Mohammad Sadeq Faqfuri* in *Kayhan* (Iran). They have sent troops and treasure to kill Muslims—mostly Shiites—in Syria, Bahrain, Iraq, and Yemen, so the number of Saudi police at the hajj was reduced this year from 60,000 to 20,000. Mecca and Medina belong to all Muslims, not just the Saudis. These holy cities "cannot and should not be monopolized by a royal family that constantly commits homicide."

Don't politicize this tragedy with "unjust criticism," said *Arab News* (Saudi Arabia). The logistics of the hajj are "mind-



Rescue workers collect bodies after the crush.

boggling." More than 2 million pilgrims from 164 countries flock here each year, and they must be housed, fed, watered, and shepherded along the route of the Prophet. Saudi Arabia has spent tens of billions of dollars on safety, infrastructure and security measures, but that's all for nothing if pilgrims refuse to follow orders. In this case, the tragedy apparently began when a group of some 300 Iranians did not wait for their allotted time to move, but struck out on their own.

How odious of the kingdom to blame the dead, said the *Daily Times* (Pakistan), especially because "signs of Saudi negligence" were apparent in the buildup to this catastrophe. The regime was so "poorly prepared" for the hajj that construction was still going on in Mecca as recently as two weeks ago, when a crane toppled into the city's Grand Mosque, killing 118 worshippers and injuring 400 more. Then, fires broke out at two major Mecca hotels, requiring the evacuation of thousands of pilgrims. That there are so many hotels and facilities around the holy sites is itself a desecration. Saudi authorities have razed sacred places that its austere, Wahhabi version of Islam does not value—such as the house of Khadijah, the Prophet's first wife, and the home of Abu Bakr, the Prophet's companion—and replaced them with toilets, tower blocks, and other infrastructure. It's time for management of the hajj to be taken away from the House of Saud and placed in more responsible hands.

INDIA

Muscling in on its little neighbor

M.K. Bhadrakumar
Asia Times (Hong Kong)

India is trying to micromanage Nepal's affairs just as it once did Sri Lanka's, said M.K. Bhadrakumar. During the Cold War, India was alarmed at Sri Lanka's pro-American bent, and so used the pretext of cultural connections to support demands for independence by Sri Lanka's Tamil minority. The result for Sri Lanka was decades of civil war and ethnic strife. Now India is upset at Nepal's close relations with China and is using its ties with Nepal's Madhesi minority as an excuse to meddle in Nepalese affairs. After a decade that saw a mass shooting in the royal family and a bloody civil war, Nepal has finally adopted its first democratic constitution, creating a secular,

federal state. While "the entire international community is celebrating" that achievement, India is "sulking." The right-wing Hindu nationalists who control the government in New Delhi are complaining that the new constitution should have given the Madhesi—who make up about one-third of Nepal's population, "thanks to large-scale migration from the Indian hinterland"—full citizenship and proportional representation in the government and army. Such a huge Madhesi bloc would dominate Nepalese politics, and India would essentially run Kathmandu. Will New Delhi push all the way, just as it did in Sri Lanka until that country finally imploded?

NEW ZEALAND

In search of a flag we can love

Toby Manhire
The New Zealand Herald

New Zealand's quest to replace the national flag has become a national drag, said Toby Manhire. There's no doubt we need a new banner. The current one is "almost indistinguishable from Australia's," and it's annoying "that a Union Jack sits there, haughtily, taking up a whole quarter." But the push for change has been equally annoying. First New Zealanders were herded into what felt like "a nationwide social studies project" and asked to submit designs. Then, out of the top 40 submissions, a selection panel picked four lousy designs—three iterations of a fern with stars, and

one black-and-white swirl—and asked us to vote on a winner. We shouldn't have expected any better from a panel that doesn't include a single "actual designer or graphic artist." But there is one good idea in the top 40, and I'm making it my mission to promote it. The "Red Peak" design features a red triangle on a white triangle on a blue field. It's bold, "looks like a flag, not a logo," and, crucially, is "simple enough to be drawn by a child." Prime Minister John Key says he wants us to "be more rah-rah," like Americans are. Well then, give us something we'd be proud to wave.

Noted

■ The share of foreign-born people living in the U.S. will rise to an all-time high within the next decade, according to a new Pew Research Center report. By 2025, at least 14.9 percent of people living in the U.S. will have been born outside the country—topping the previous high of 14.8 percent set in 1890. Today, about 45 million people, or 13.7 percent, of those living in the U.S. were born elsewhere.

TheDailyBeast.com

■ Nearly 620,000 people were arrested for simple marijuana possession across the U.S. in 2014, according to the FBI, despite relaxed laws in many states. That's more than 1,700 weed arrests per day.

HuffingtonPost.com



■ About 47 percent of all edible seafood in the U.S. went to waste between 2009 and 2013, largely because consumers and restaurants don't cook it before it spoils. The 2.3 billion pounds of seafood thrown in the trash each year would provide enough protein for 10 million people for a year.

WashingtonPost.com

■ For the first time since 1950, Detroit's white population increased in 2014, by 8,000 people. White Millennials seeking housing bargains are moving in.

Detroit News

■ Pope Francis called on U.S. priests to devote more time to their parishioners' spiritual needs. But 20 percent of U.S. parishes no longer have a priest in residence. For each U.S. priest, there are 2,600 parishioners.

FiveThirtyEight.com

Water on Mars: A sign of life?

"Mars seems to be a little bit wet," said **Kenneth Chang** in *The New York Times*. NASA this week reported "definitive signs of liquid water," on the Martian surface, fueling speculation that microbial life could exist on the Red Planet. The Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter has revealed dark streaks resembling rivulets, about 300 feet long, suggesting that salty water trickles

down Martian canyons and craters during the planet's warmest months. Billions of years ago, Mars used to have abundant water, and even an ocean, before its atmosphere was stripped away and surface temperatures plunged to an average -81 degrees Fahrenheit. While astronomers confirmed the presence of ice on Mars in 2008, conditions seemed too frigid for liquid water. But the water streaks Orbiter has identified suggest the presence of underground aquifers that sometimes seep to the surface. If so, said NASA mission chief John Grunsfeld, "it suggests it would be possible for there to be life today on Mars."

"Scientists may find life, but it might not be Martian life," said **Adrienne LaFrance** in *The Atlantic.com*. When NASA actually goes looking for water-supported organisms on Mars, there's a real danger that invading Earth microbes, on a



Streaks made by rivulets of water on Mars

spacecraft or the bottom of an astronaut's boot, could pass for or contaminate Martian life-forms. That fear is why world powers signed the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, said **Akshat Rathi** in *Qz.com*. Under the treaty, landers must stay away from water sources unless the probes are thoroughly sterilized, and the NASA rovers now exploring Mars don't meet the standard. So at the moment, "NASA has to stay away from the very regions where it might find water or life."

Still, this week marks a major turning point in our search for extraterrestrial life, said **Aleksandra Sagan** in *CBC.ca*. Within our solar system, Jupiter's moon Europa and Saturn's moon Enceladus both appear to have liquid, habitable oceans under icy surfaces. Outside the solar system, NASA has already identified 31 planets in the so-called Goldilocks zone, "just the right distance from a star to be neither too hot nor too cold for liquid water to be present." Of course, "scientists are guided by only one example of life," the water-dependent kind that lives on Earth. In a universe with billions and billions of planets, life may have evolved in ways and under conditions we can't imagine.

Clinton emails: Why the questions won't stop

Hillary Clinton keeps digging herself a deeper hole, said **Shannen Coffin** in *NationalReview.com*. Polls show that most Americans believe she is lying about the emails she sent from a private server when she was secretary of state—and why wouldn't they? Every time the Democratic presidential front-runner addresses the scandal, her legalistic evasions only raise more questions. Clinton has asserted under oath that she began using her personal server in March 2009 and has surrendered all 30,000 work-related emails since then. But the State Department last week revealed it had been given correspondence between Clinton and Gen. David Petraeus, then head of U.S. Central Command, from January 2009 that Clinton never turned over. In a classic Clintonian defense, she blamed the discrepancy on her lawyers, saying they decided which emails were personal and which were official. "I did not participate," Clinton said. "I did not want to be looking over their shoulder."

Clinton may evade all she likes, but "she can't beat the Freedom of Information Act," said **Kimberley Strassel** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The State Department now faces 35 FOIA lawsuits requesting Clinton emails, and the department

has been required to provide broad summaries of emails it has withheld. Those summaries show an unethically close relationship between State Department officials and Clinton Foundation staff, with her State Department staff emailing a Clinton Foundation board member about Clinton's planned trip to Africa, and sending "invitations to foreign business executives" to attend foundation events. It's as if the State Department and the foundation were rolled up into "one, big Clinton-promoting entity." If the FOIA lawsuits prove that Hillary used her power as secretary to promote her family's foundation, it means "big trouble ahead."

Don't buy the hype, said **Joe Trippi** in the *Los Angeles Times*. Yes, there's no doubt that the private email server was "a mistake" and that Clinton's "clumsy" responses have hurt her. But Clinton's campaign is not collapsing—far from it. She retains sizable national leads over Bernie Sanders and the undeclared Joe Biden. She'd be tough to beat in the general election, especially after GOP candidates beat each other up and alienate key voting blocs. If Republicans didn't believe Clinton remains their most formidable foe, "they wouldn't be trying so hard to stop her now."

Drug prices: The 5,500 percent increase

"If Martin Shkreli is not the most hated man in America," said **Clarence Page** in the *Chicago Tribune*, "he must at least be first runner-up." The brash 32-year-old CEO of Turing Pharmaceuticals caused widespread outrage last week when he jacked up the price of Daraprim, a drug used by cancer and AIDS patients to treat a life-threatening infection



Shkreli: I win!

called toxoplasmosis, by 5,500 percent overnight—from \$13.50 a tablet to \$750. Shkreli initially insisted the increase "was not excessive at all," but amid the ensuing firestorm, said he'd cut the price by some unspecified amount. The U.S. is the only country in the world that lets Big Pharma set its own prices, said **Dean Baker** in *NYTimes.com*. As a result, Americans pay the highest drug prices in the world—double what many Europeans pay for the same drugs. This isn't free-market economics, because our government gives drug companies monopolies on patented drugs, enabling them to blackmail the sick the way firefighters could if they negotiated their pay after "they showed up at your burning house."

Big Pharma makes for an easy villain, said **Nick Stockton** in *Wired.com*. But bringing just one drug to market today costs nearly \$2.6 billion in research and development, and it takes more than

a decade to be tested and approved. If drug companies didn't earn back the money, the drugs wouldn't get made in the first place—and sick patients would be even worse off. Anyway, it's insurance companies who really "determine what patients pay for medicines," said **Peter Pitts** in the *New York Post*. These organizations

often negotiate 20 to 50 percent discounts with drugmakers, but then fail to pass on these cuts to the consumer—instead pocketing the money "to pad their bottom lines."

It's true that developing a new drug is an "expensive and risky process," said the *Chicago Tribune* in an editorial. But "that's not the case with Daraprim"—a medicine developed by another company 62 years ago. When Shkreli bought the rights to Daraprim and hiked its price, he was simply looking to make a massive profit. Besides, pharmaceutical companies are "hardly strapped for money," said **Marcia Angell** in the *Washington Post*. The industry's profit margin was almost 20 percent in 2013, higher than the banking industry's. It's time to emulate other countries and set price caps for drugs or allow Medicare to negotiate prices. If we don't, drugmakers will continue to price-gouge—"because they can."

Cybersecurity: China takes the pledge

"In the years-long chicken match over Chinese cyberspying, Beijing just blinked," said **Shane Harris** in *TheDailyBeast.com*. President Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping last week pledged not to "conduct or knowingly support" the cybertheft of intellectual property or trade secrets for commercial gain—something Beijing has long been accused of doing. Under the accord, which came after repeated American threats to sanction Chinese companies involved in "rampant computer hacking," the two countries will help each other investigate incidents of economic cybercrime, and set up a Cold War-esque cyber "hotline." The pledge was the centerpiece of Xi's visit to Washington, during which he also announced a landmark cap-and-trade program to limit China's greenhouse gas emissions. Obama himself expressed skepticism that China will abide by its promise on cybercrime, said **Jason Healey** in *CSMonitor.com*. But if the deal does fall apart, "the U.S. will be in a much stronger position to respond to Beijing over its commercial espionage."

In reality, "the two sides agreed to nothing," said *The Wall Street Journal* in an editorial. Despite clear evidence of Chinese hackers stealing proprietary information from major companies, Beijing

insists it isn't involved. "If Xi won't admit to the problem, his minions won't, either." Until Chinese leaders "see there are costs to their aggression," it will continue. The White House has no reason for optimism, said **Albert Hunt** in *BloombergView.com*. Two years ago, Obama hailed similar discussions with China—including an agreement on cybersecurity—as "terrific." But since then, Chinese hackers have stolen the personnel files of more than 20 million American government workers, giving Beijing's spies plenty of blackmail material. "The next few months will show whether this time will be different."

If this and future accords are to have any chance of succeeding, there needs to be a "framework of international norms" on cybercrime, said **Daniel Gerstein** in *USNews.com*. Hackers can essentially cripple an entire nation—by shutting down its power grid, say, or crashing its financial system—yet "there's not even an internationally accepted glossary of terminology" for what constitutes cybercrime and cyberwarfare. It's imperative that developed nations create the cyber equivalent of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Until defined boundaries are set, the cyberworld will remain a dangerously "ungoverned space."

Wit & Wisdom

"Why is art beautiful?
Because it's useless.
Why is life ugly?
Because it's all ends and
purposes and intentions."
**Poet Fernando Pessoa, quoted
in The Wall Street Journal**

"A 2-year-old is kind of like
having a blender, but you
don't have a top for it."
**Jerry Seinfeld, quoted in
BuzzFeed.com**

"In Buenos Aires, mothers
say to me, 'My son is 34
and he's not getting married;
I don't know what to
do.' So I tell them, 'Don't
iron his shirts anymore!'"
**Pope Francis, quoted in
Refinery29.com**

"Scar tissue is stronger
than regular tissue. Realize
the strength, move on."
**Henry Rollins, quoted in
HuffingtonPost.com**

"One of the ridiculous
aspects of being a poet is
the gulf between how seriously
we take ourselves
and how generally we are
ignored by everybody else."
**Billy Collins, quoted in
The Boston Globe**

"It's a shame that the
only thing a man can do
for eight hours a day is
work. He can't eat for eight
hours; he can't drink for
eight hours; he can't make
love for eight hours. The
only thing a man can do
for eight hours is work."
**William Faulkner, quoted in
The Buffalo News**

"The secret of change is
to focus all of your energy,
not on fighting the old, but
on building the new."
Socrates, quoted in NJ.com

Poll watch

■ **65%** of Americans think
that the government
should continue to fund
Planned Parenthood. **29%**
think it should be stripped
of its funding, including
59% of Republicans. **73%** of
Americans oppose shutting
down the government to
block funding for the organization,
while **19%** support
a shutdown.

USA Today/Suffolk University

Kickstarter: Doing well by doing good

Kickstarter just set itself apart from the profit-grabbing startup pack, said Alison Griswold in *Slate.com*. The popular crowdfunding website, which helps people raise money for all manner of projects, including new tech gadgets and movies, announced last week that it was reincorporating as a “public benefit corporation”—a legal change that obligates the company “to do good not just for shareholders but also for society.” Kickstarter has promised in a new charter to protect users’ privacy, support environmental initiatives, and donate 5 percent of its after-tax profits to arts education and fighting inequality. The company has also pledged not to use tax loopholes or other “esoteric but legal” strategies to lower its tax bill. This “does not mean Kickstarter does not want to make money,” said Catherine Clifford in *Entrepreneur.com*. The company already notches up to \$10 million in profits a year, though its co-founders say they have no interest in going public or selling. But they don’t see any conflict between making money and making a difference.

“Well done,” said Felix Salmon in *Fusion.net*. How refreshing to see Kickstarter’s co-founders, Yancey Strickler and Perry Chen, resist the urge to “get rich quick” and instead put their revenues to use “shaping the world for the better.” Benefit corporations truly combine the best of both the nonprofit and



Chen and Strickler: A new tech model

for-profit worlds. Kickstarter won’t have to “constantly cultivate fickle donors” as most nonprofits must do, and it will be able to support its chosen mission and philanthropic goals with the kind of healthy profits that come with sound business strategies.

“Let’s not get carried away by the hype,” said Rick Cohen in *NonprofitQuarterly.org*. It’s pretty clear why Kickstarter has made this shift—namely “public relations and branding.” Plenty of companies donate a portion of their profits hoping to score the kind of glowing press coverage that Kickstarter has gotten this past week. And by promising to be transparent about its good works, Kickstarter “will be doing what many corporations in the public eye do as a matter of course.” Just see Halliburton’s latest corporate sustainability report or Walmart’s recent missive on its social and environmental efforts.

Still, Kickstarter has now publicly committed to “consider the broader public impact, not just potential profit” of every decision it makes, said Adele Peters in *FastCoexist.com*. That’s a laudable position to take, and it allows the founders to focus on building a sustainable business that will last for a long time, not just a flash-in-the-pan lottery ticket. Best to wish them success, if only to “inspire other tech companies to follow.”

Innovation of the week

The next time a swollen river wipes out a bridge, drones might be sent in to do the rebuilding, said Michelle Starr in *CNET.com*. Researchers at the Zurich-based Swiss Federal Institute of Technology have successfully programmed a squad of small quadcopter drones to autonomously build a rope bridge “capable of bearing the weight of a human.” In a laboratory test, a team of three quadcopters was able to scan the 24-foot distance between two sets of scaffolding and figure out how to build the bridge on their own, without human intervention, using ropes that they looped, braided, and knotted together. The drones also independently selected the best anchor points for the rope for maximum load bearing and stability. When it comes to disaster response, “there’s no denying that the small, lightweight aerial vehicles have potential.”



Bytes: What’s new in tech

Quirky goes under

Crowdsourced invention startup Quirky filed for bankruptcy last week, “a far fall for a company that initially showed promise,” said Stephanie Gleason and Ted Mann in *The Wall Street Journal*. After launching in 2009, Quirky raised \$185 million from investors, including General Electric and top venture capital firms, who saw profit potential in the company’s business model of finding and developing promising consumer products from a wide community of inventors. Quirky ultimately brought more than 400 products to market, with royalties paid to inventors. But the hits, like a flexible power strip that sold more than 1.5 million units, couldn’t make up for the costly misses, such as a digital refrigerator tray that tells you when you’re running low on eggs.

An AI personal assistant

Amy Ingram is an excellent personal assistant: “professional, prompt, and receptive to critiques,” said Sara Ashley O’Brien in *CNN.com*. Over the past 18 months, she’s scheduled tens of thousands of meetings and phone calls for her clients. But as Amy’s initials suggest, she’s not human. She’s an artificial intelligence program. Beta users of personal-assistant startup X.ai give Amy ac-

cess to their digital calendars and simply “cc” Amy on an email requesting a meeting. From there, Amy takes over the task of coordinating schedules and setting a date. Her programmers are currently teaching her the “nuances of human language and personalities” so she can handle tricky calendar conflicts, and they hope to offer her services to the public by early 2016 for a small monthly fee.

The world’s smartest building

The Edge “knows who you’re meeting with today and how much sugar you take in your coffee,” said Tom Randall in *Bloomberg.com*. The Amsterdam office building is the “smartest” ever built and offers a peek at the “connected future of architecture.” Its main tenant, consulting firm Deloitte, has developed a smartphone app that directs workers to available parking spaces when they arrive at the Edge and manages the company’s attempt at “hot desking,” in which 2,500 workers share 1,000 desks. Assignments for meeting rooms, “concentration rooms,” and standing desks are based on workers’ schedules. The app also “knows your preferences for light and temperature, and it tweaks the environment accordingly” wherever you go. Smart coffee machines even remember how you like your joe.

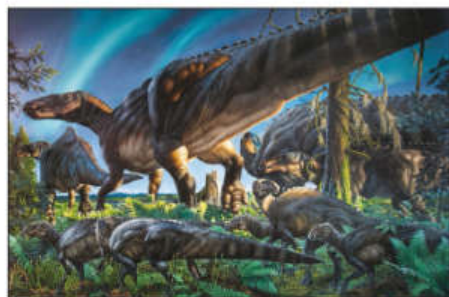
Your personal cloud of germs

Every human body is surrounded by an invisible cloud of millions of microbes that is as unique as our fingerprints, new research has found. Like Pig Pen, the dusty kid from *Peanuts*, we carry our microbial cloud wherever we go, leaving a trace of this "signature" even after we leave a room. *Streptococcus* rides on our breath, for example, while the skin emits *Propionibacterium*, and there is even evidence that gut microbes escape into the air through our clothing. In the University of Oregon study, researchers asked 11 people to sit in an environmentally controlled chamber while they analyzed the air in the

room. Within four hours it was possible to identify most of the volunteers simply by the unique combinations of bacteria they left behind. "In my office, when I walk across the room, I'm carrying behind me an invisible train of air," lead author James Meadow tells *TheAtlantic.com*. "On a microscopic level, it might look something like an 18-wheeler going down a dusty road." Some micro-



bial clouds are more distinguishable than others, and all are subject to variables such as diet, health, and personal hygiene, which can affect how much bacteria a person sheds. The findings could one day help identify crime suspects or enhance the understanding of how infectious diseases spread indoors. But the researchers say it will be some time before they can identify people's bacterial clouds in the more complex environment of the real world.



How Ugrunaaluk may have looked

Alaska's lost world of dinosaurs

Dinosaurs are commonly thought to have lived in temperate and tropical climates, thundering through forests and jungles or over grassy plains. But paleontologists now believe a plant-eating, duck-billed giant roamed the frigid landscape of northern Alaska about 70 million years ago. After analyzing thousands of dinosaur bones discovered around the Prince Creek geological formation along Alaska's Colville River, researchers have identified a distinct species of hadrosaur, called *Ugrunaaluk kuukpikensis*, or "ancient grazer," *ScienceDaily.com* reports. These creatures could move around on all fours but primarily walked on their hind legs, and they had hundreds of teeth, which helped them gnaw coarse vegetation. Most of the recovered *Ugrunaaluk* skeletons were from young dinosaurs, suggesting the herd was suddenly wiped out. Scientists are amazed that dinosaurs lived in that environment. The climate in northern Alaska was more forgiving in the Late Cretaceous period than it is today, with average temperatures in the low 40s. Still, the dinosaurs would have endured long, snowy winter months of Arctic darkness. "The finding of dinosaurs this far north challenges everything we thought about a dinosaur's physiology," says researcher Greg Erickson. "It creates this natural question: How did they survive up here?"

Paleo people downed carbs

Proponents of the trendy Paleo diet urge us all to eat like our Stone Age ancestors of the Paleolithic period, subsisting on meats, fish, nuts, and berries and avoiding grains and dairy. The idea is that early humans weren't as prone to weight gain, cancers, diabetes, heart disease, and other ills that plague the postagricultural world. But as it turns out, cavemen liked their carbohydrates, too. Long before farmers outnumbered foragers, Paleolithic hunter-gatherers painstakingly collected wild oats and used stone tools to make a type of flour, a new study reveals. Paleontologists unearthed an ancient stone from a cave in southeastern Italy that dates back 32,000 years to the Gravettian culture, and to their surprise found residue from wild oats, suggesting the artifact served as a pestle for grinding. The researchers say the flour produced by this process was probably mixed with water to make porridge or flatbread, which would be easier to transport and store during winter. The belief that prehistoric people didn't eat grain "is just wrong," the University of Leicester's Huw Barton tells *NationalGeographic.com*. "People ate what they could get their hands on. Eating is surviving."

An ocean on Saturn's moon?

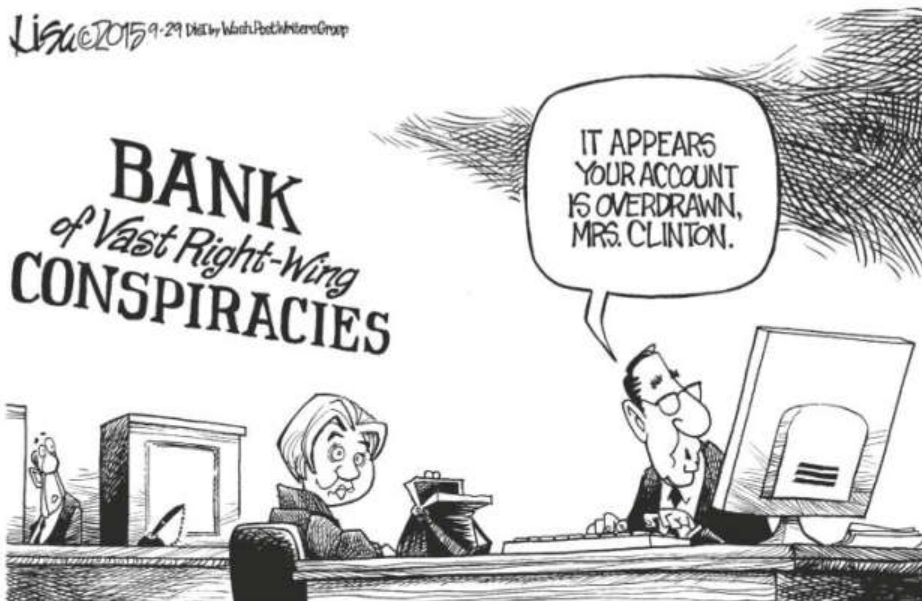
One of Saturn's 62 moons may have a massive ocean sloshing around below its icy surface, new research reveals. Poring over more than seven years of images captured by NASA's Cassini space probe, astronomers detected a slight but distinct wobble in the moon Enceladus, reports *LATimes.com*. The discovery, researchers say, rules out the possibility that the moon's crust is frozen to a core of solid rock. "If the surface and core were rigidly connected, the core would provide so

much dead weight, the wobble would be far smaller," explains study co-author Matthew Tiscareno. "This proves that there must be a global layer of liquid separating the surface from the core." The new findings suggest that geysers of water vapor, first observed on Enceladus' surface by NASA's Cassini spacecraft a decade ago, are being fed by this vast liquid reservoir and that the moon is much warmer than previously thought. Taken as a whole, NASA's John Grunsfeld says, these conditions hint that Enceladus "could contain environments suitable for living organisms."

Health scare of the week Dangerous misdiagnoses

Most Americans receive an incorrect or delayed diagnosis at some point in their lives, a new government report finds, often with devastating consequences. Autopsy reports and medical records show that misdiagnoses contribute to 10 percent of patient deaths, reveals the study conducted by the Institute of Medicine's Health Advisory Committee. In a given year, an estimated 12 million U.S. adults who seek care in a physician's office or outpatient facility are misdiagnosed. Unfortunately, most errors are discovered only in retrospect, in part because there are few measures to track them. The study also blames a lack of communication between clinicians and patients, and a medical culture that discourages doctors from admitting mistakes. As the health-care system becomes more complex, it will require new systems to identify errors and encourage more collaboration among doctors. Making improvements represents "a moral professional public-health imperative," committee chair Dr. John R. Ball tells *CBSNews.com*. "Achieving the goal will require a significant re-envisioning of the diagnostic process and widespread commitment to change."





KANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE © 2015 CHERIE DIERING



The Exorcist



STAR TRIBUNE Cartoons.com



'I liked the anti-gay guy, then the anti-Mexican guy, but now I'm giving the anti-Muslim guy a serious look...'

Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

Chilled: How Refrigeration Changed the World and Might Do So Again

by Tom Jackson (Bloomsbury/Sigma, \$27)

To understand just how vital refrigeration is to modern life, “it helps to remember a world without it,” said **Sarah Begley** in *Time*. Science writer Tom Jackson claims that disabling all electric cooling systems would “bring civilization to its knees,” and he may be right. Artificial cooling doesn’t just extend the useful life of food, after all: It also makes MRI scans possible, plays a key role in the production of some medicines, and keeps the internet running by preventing computer servers from overheating. Though Jackson’s history of cooling technology reminds us that we only conquered ice making a century ago, his story reaches back to ancient times, said **Pamela Miller** in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. “Kings, geniuses, ice salesmen, quacks, 1950s housewives, and many more memorable characters all have their day in this lively, learned narrative.”



A 1930s ice-delivery man

The Romans, for all they did to advance water technology, never got very far with ice, said **Bee Wilson** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Though Roman patricians had snow carted in from the mountains to chill their wines, “it was the Persians who made the greatest breakthroughs in refrigeration,” even developing a home-cooling system that circulated air over an underground tunnel of cold water. Jackson notes that the physics behind cooling technologies hasn’t really changed since. Yet the first

ice-making machine wasn’t built until the 1850s, and the first portable refrigerator, created to keep beer cool, was invented in Germany in 1873. In America, most households continued to rely on iceboxes and ice-delivery men through the 1920s and beyond. But because the ice blocks were harvested from lakes or rivers, they occasionally spread diseases like dysentery or even typhoid fever. “No wonder we got excited when true fridges arrived.”

The journey to that breakthrough took many turns, said **Damian Whitworth** in *The Times* (U.K.). Though Jackson “tries hard to maintain a chirpy tone as he guides us through all this,” *Chilled* “can be heavy going—with just too many characters doing too many experiments.” Still, “there is plenty of fascinating stuff here,” including a description of Albert Einstein’s failed design for a refrigerator and a rollicking account of the business wars waged by rival 19th-century ice harvesters. But does anyone besides Jackson truly believe that the refrigerator is “humanity’s greatest achievement”? Yes, agriculture, language, and the wheel can seem like old news, but in the big picture, they remain “much cooler.”

Novel of the week

The Blue Guitar

by John Banville (Knopf, \$26)

The narrator of John Banville’s latest “has an engaging way with words,” said **Wendy Smith** in *The Boston Globe*. Though he’s self-absorbed, “we’re inclined to like Oliver even when he behaves badly,” and he does—this failed painter and petty thief has just fled to his childhood home out of fear that his affair with a friend’s wife is about to be discovered. Most of the story’s surprises from that point on arise from the fact that Oliver is so fixated on a metaphysical quandary that he’s “clueless about pretty much everything else.” Unfortunately, Banville’s performance here is at best “a karaoke version of Beckett,” said **Claire Lowdon** in *The Spectator* (U.K.). Oliver’s “mannered, impacted prose” often bewilders, especially when he applies his florid vocabulary to agonizing about the impossibility of an objective reality. But Banville, who won the 2005 Man Booker Prize for *The Sea*, grounds Oliver’s dilemma in a profound sense of personal loss, said **Jon Michaud** in *The Washington Post*. *The Blue Guitar* is “arguably the funniest” of Banville’s novels, but it is “heartbreaking” too.

Why Not Me?

by Mindy Kaling (Crown, \$25)



Even if *Why Not Me?* contained nothing but Mindy Kaling’s old tweets, “the thing would sell—fast,” said **Jen Chaney** in *The Washington Post*. Thankfully, the writer and star of *The Mindy Project* has instead followed up 2011’s per-

fectly enjoyable *Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me?* with a “funnier, sharper, and more confident” collection of essays and pop-culture riffs. Yes, “there are times when Kaling relies on semi-frustrating authorial life hacks.” One chapter is a reprint of the 2014 commencement speech she made at Harvard Law School. But the 36-year-old comedian has clearly found her place in life and is “more than comfortable inviting people to spend time with her there.”

Kaling doesn’t attempt to deliver the kinds of “brainy, hard-won” insights that memoirists strive for, said **Paul S. Makishima** in *The Boston Globe*. Yet amid this book’s

random observations about weddings, photo shoots, and how actors are lying when they say they hate filming sex scenes, some “moments of genuine insight” do arrive. Kaling’s life is clearly dominated by work: A typical day of writing and filming runs from 5 a.m. to half past midnight, and she considers it a routine year if she takes no vacation time. That grinder’s mindset, she reveals, helped sink a relationship she fell into last year with a Secret Service agent assigned to protecting President Obama.

Still, “at its core,” Kaling’s book is a defense of work, said **Megan Garber** in *The Atlantic*. Her description of “a certain type of greasy hair that you only get when you are writing with no breaks” might be a little off-putting, but “in its quiet way,” the passage is revolutionary. These days, in Hollywood and beyond, Americans honor effortless achievement and “I woke up like this” beauty. But in a world where ambition is regarded as crass, Kaling unabashedly owns up to her striving. Like Tina Fey’s *Bossypants*, *Why Not Me?* “is ultimately an advice book,” and Kaling’s advice is that confidence is not just an attitude. “Confidence is something you earn, Kaling argues. And you earn it, specifically, by caring about things, by trying to get things accomplished, by working.”

Best books...chosen by Christian Rudder

Christian Rudder is a co-founder of the dating site *OkCupid* and the company's former president. His recent book *Dataclysm*, a lighthearted tour of the things we reveal about ourselves when we go online, has just become available in paperback.



The Long Ships by Frans Gunnar Bengtsson (NYRB Classics, \$18). Humor, like salt, makes everything better. I consider it required seasoning for any piece of writing, which is why the first title in this list of my favorite unlikely comedies is this 1955 novel about Vikings. Frans Gunnar Bengtsson wryly captures the silliness of a world in which both the problems and the solutions are men swinging axes.

A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole (Grove, \$16). Ignatius J. Reilly is the most original, most difficult, most worldview-havingest character ever created. Here he is on page six: "I am at the moment writing a lengthy indictment against our century. When my brain begins to reel from my literary labors, I make an occasional cheese dip." This Pulitzer Prize-winning book is my favorite novel. I wish I could quote it all for you here.

Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov (Vintage, \$16). There are a lot of reasons to love this book; my reason is the scathing arrogance of its narrator, Humbert Humbert.

Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut (Dell, \$16). Vonnegut's fourth novel was, I think, the first "serious" book I ever read. There's so much humor in the blackness, though. I've read every other Vonnegut book since, but this satire on the nuclear arms race remains my favorite.

Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters by J.D. Salinger (Little, Brown, \$8). This novella about a wedding day when the groom goes missing was originally published in *The New Yorker* and is part of Salinger's Glass family saga. (It's paired in paperback with a later novella, *Seymour: An Introduction*.) Because the narrator is looking back on the events described, Seymour Glass' subsequent suicide hangs over the book, but there are brilliant deadpan lines throughout.

Lucky Jim by Kingsley Amis (NYRB Classics, \$15). I never went to grad school, and Amis' novel about an underachieving medieval history lecturer at a second-rate English university confirmed me in that decision. Jim Dixon also helped me discover the magic satisfaction of imagining pushing peas up people's noses.

Author of the week

Jonathan Evison

Novelist Jonathan Evison didn't have to stretch much when he created his latest protagonist, said **Brian Miller** in *Seattle Weekly*. Evison's fourth novel, *This Is Your Life, Harriet Chance!*, focuses on a spunky 78-year-old widow



inspired in part by the women Evison got to know when he was 17 and living in a California seniors-only

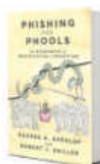
motor-home court because his grandmother needed an in-home caregiver. What struck him was their capacity to start anew. "It was mostly widowed women. I was amazed how flexible they were," he says. "I watched old people reinvent themselves, shifting their whole political ideology from whatever their husband's was for the last 50 years. Once they got out of these patriarchal, traditional Greatest Generation relationships, I was amazed."

Evison has reinvented himself a few times, too, said **Kirk Reed Forrester** in *Kirkus Reviews*. During the decades between that first caregiver gig and the 2008 publication of his debut novel, *All About Lulu*, he made his living from odd jobs: digging ditches, pulverizing roadkill, caring for a disabled boy, and selling sunglasses over the telephone. While there wasn't a future in any of those positions, Evison gained from them a reflexive sympathy for underdogs, including gray-haired widows. "Who is more marginalized in our culture than elderly women?" he asks. "Nobody really pays any attention to them except the medical industry. I think we all underestimate elderly people. I think these are the people with the most experience. They've seen the most, and they have the most time to think."

Also of interest...in myths, legends, and lies

Phishing for Phools

by George Akerlof & Robert Shiller (Princeton, \$25)



"Econo-nerds have been waiting eagerly for this book," said *The Economist*. The co-authors are Nobel Prize-winning economists who've devoted "enormous collective brain-power" to developing their ideas

about how much swindling is baked into any free-market system. But while the anecdotes they've collected provide "perfect material for cocktail-party chatter," the big takeaway never arrives. We learn the tricks of deceptive car salesmen and credit card firms, but all that comes across is that "there are lots of nasty people about."

Asking for It

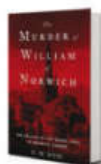
by Kate Harding (Da Capo, \$16)



It's time to stop pretending that rape is punished with sufficient ferocity, said Amanda Marcotte in *Slate.com*. Journalist Kate Harding, who possesses "a finely honed impatience with bulls---," has produced a valuable primer on sexual violence in America. It makes clear how rarely rapists are held accountable and how much damage is done by the popular beliefs that false rape accusations are common and that the line between consent and refusal is ambiguous. If the concept of "rape culture" baffles you, this is the book to read.

The Murder of William of Norwich

by E.M. Rose (Oxford, \$28)



How did violent anti-Semitism sweep through medieval Europe? This "fascinating" book by a Princeton historian "traces in forensic detail" the roots of the myth that Jews sometimes murdered Christian children for ritual purposes, said Ben Cohen in *The Wall Street Journal*. The slander began, we learn, when a 12th-century English knight defended himself in a murder trial by accusing his Jewish victim of masterminding such a rite. This detailed account represents "a landmark of historical research."

The Lost Detective

by Nathan Ward (Bloomsbury, \$26)



Dashiell Hammett's life story is full of holes, but "there are few personae more interesting to read about," said Art Taylor in *The Washington Post*. The godfather of noir was a Pinkerton detective before he turned writer, and he left behind a tangle of half-truths and tall tales that obscure how he came to his hard-boiled style and worldview. *The Lost Detective* provides an entertaining exploration of how fact and fiction intersected in Hammett's work, and it's "as brisk and conversational as a magazine feature."

Exhibit of the week**Mark Rothko: A Retrospective**

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,
through Jan. 24

What more can be said about Mark Rothko? asked **Randy Tibbitts** in the *Houston Press*. The painter's great blocks of luminous color have been praised for many decades; long before his death, in 1970, he emerged from "the primordial soup" of New York-style abstract expressionism to join the pantheon of artists whose work "changes forever the way all the rest of us can see." Yet the 60-plus paintings in this retrospective prove that Rothko's work still has the power to surprise. The great revelation of this exhibition is "the beauty and quality of his paintings of the 1930s and '40s—that is, before he found his signature style." In these rarely shown works, Rothko was collapsing space as Matisse and Milton Avery had, while incorporating imagery from surrealists like Max Ernst. These canvases are so different from the Rothkos of the 1950s "that seeing them is almost like discovering a great new painter."

For Rothko, "progress was achieved by deletion," said **Carter Ratcliff** in *Art & Antiques*. After dropping out of Yale in 1923, he moved to New York, where he



Rothko's No. 9 (1948): A foretelling of greatness

took up the surrealist practice of automatism, in which the artist tries to let his subconscious guide his hand. This technique led to the creation of works like *The Syrian Bull* (1943), in which an "extravagantly organic form in yellow" stands out against a blue-gray backdrop. "Already one can see the atmospheric subtleties that, in his mature work, turn a canvas into a broodingly gor-

geous wall of light." By the end of the decade, Rothko's "suggestions of biological form had vanished, replaced by patches and streaks of high-keyed orange, yellow, and green." In turn, these chromatic patterns were reduced to simple color blocks. Rothko was after more than just striking juxtapositions of hues; he was striving to reveal transcendent truth through a purity of expression that he never believed he achieved.

Visitors to this retrospective may disagree, said **Lance Esplund** in *The Wall Street Journal*. In Rothko's first masterpiece, an untitled 1951 painting, a peach-colored lozenge "hovers in a sea of acid yellows," and the effect is "jarring, erotic, and mirage-like." Rothko's palette darkened as his health declined in the late 1960s. Many consider his late experiments with dark reds and black as evidence of the depression that foreshadowed his suicide. But I see them as "further

expressions of a lifelong engagement with light and color." Indeed, a lively untitled red canvas painted the year of his death closes the show, and the streak of bare canvas that crosses its middle "skids across the painting with the violence of a skinned knee." The work feels like "the sounding of an alarm—a call to the human experience of all things sensual."

Where to buy

A select exhibition in a private gallery

Marjorie Cameron Parsons Kimmel

(1922–1995) was a bewitching talent. The Iowa-born artist, who went by the single name "Cameron," became an occultist and a cult-film star after befriending a group of mystics in Pasadena that included rocket scientist Jack Parsons, her future husband. Her place in L.A. art history was secured in 1957, when her *Peyote Vision*—an ink drawing of a fantastical couple copulating—got a gallery owner locked up on obscenity charges. She refused to exhibit her work again. But Cameron, celebrated in a museum show last year, had a fertile imagination and remarkable command of line, evident in works like the undated painting above. At **Jeffrey Deitch**, 76 Grand St., New York City. (212) 343-7300. Prices range from \$15,000 to \$125,000.



Walking Bird

**Making Place:
The Architecture of David Adjaye**

Art Institute of Chicago, through Jan. 3

David Adjaye has "staggering range," said **Monica Khemsurov** in *W* magazine. The 48-year-old Ghanaian-British architect has completed nearly 50 projects on four continents, and "what ties his work together isn't any specific aesthetic but his propensity for tailoring each project to its local context." His soon-to-open National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., for example, already sports a latticed aluminum façade patterned after the ornamental metalwork designed by slaves and freed slaves in the mid-19th-century American South. Rumors that Adjaye is a leading candidate to win the commission for an Obama presidential library in Chicago makes the timing of this exhibition "especially fortuitous," said **Hedy Weiss** in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. It gives locals a peek at Adjaye's

distinctive approach to design challenges.

The show "gets off to a wobbly start," said **Blair Kamin** in the *Chicago Tribune*. Various scale models of private homes designed by Adjaye are shown stripped of context, undermining the idea that he's forever sensitive to a project's surroundings. But then come his compelling public buildings, including the Whitechapel Idea Store, a library in London's East End whose colorful glass exterior picks up cues from surrounding vendor stalls and thus "blurs the boundaries between the marketplace of the street and the marketplace of ideas." Recent work indicates that Adjaye might resort



Adjaye's museum for the National Mall

to repeating himself as his portfolio grows, but at his best, he is "forging a new kind of civic architecture—less formal and imposing than hoary classical temples and thus well suited to a time when the plight of migrants commands the front page and nations struggle to negotiate ever more diverse populations."

The Christians

Playwrights Horizons, New York City, (212) 279-4200 ★★★★★

"Mature plays about faith aren't typical," said Alexis Soloski in *The Guardian* (U.K.). Dramas that deal with religion and revelation normally come freighted with melodrama or laden with flimsy theological arguments. But Lucas Hnath is "playing a more complicated game." His latest work, *The Christians*, examines a doctrinal dispute that erupts when Pastor Paul, the leader of a middle-American megachurch, tells his congregation that they should no longer believe in hell. Hnath understands the world he's portraying—his mother was an evangelical preacher in Orlando—and that knowledge has helped him create a drama that asks "legitimately difficult questions about belief and behavior."

"It only takes a look at the befuddled faces before us to realize that Pastor Paul's revelation may not sit easily with some of his flock," said Charles Isherwood in *The New York Times*. Paul, played by a "forcefully moving" Andrew Garman, faces the strongest opposition from his associate pastor,



Garman's Pastor Paul: Both shepherd and divider

Joshua, who leaps to the pulpit to question his superior's interpretation of Scripture and what it would mean if sinners escaped punishment in the afterlife. Larry Powell brings "a powerful sense of confused grievance" to the role, and others soon join Joshua in objecting to a radical change in their church's theology. Even Paul's wife, who smiles and nods through much of the 90-minute play, eventually challenges him and questions his motives. Hnath's sympathies may lie with

Paul, but he isn't afraid to make the pastor's confidence look like intransigence or present opposing viewpoints with "virtually equal clarity and compassion."

"Unfortunately, even with its provocative ideas, the play never really catches fire," said Frank Scheck in *The Hollywood Reporter*. The production might be to blame: In a "bizarre stylistic choice," the actors deliver every line—even whispered, private conversations—via handheld microphones. But look beyond such minor idiosyncrasies and you'll find a play that exudes real passion, said Jesse Green in *NYMag.com*. Garman "walks a difficult line perfectly" as the pastor: "oily and theatrical enough to have gotten the job, but honest and self-doubting enough to risk losing it." In "godless New York," we're not used to seeing such humanizing treatment of evangelicals. "Hnath dares us to see anti-religious prejudice as just another form of faith, equally founded in mere feeling and equally difficult to dislodge."

Erroll Garner

The Complete Concert by the Sea

★★★★★



The late jazz pianist Erroll Garner was "an entertainer with few peers," said Marc Myers in *The Wall Street Journal*. The self-taught musician created one of the most popular

jazz albums ever when he played a 1955 concert that was taped by an Armed Forces Radio engineer, but only now has the entire 100-minute performance been available. The count of songs has doubled—to 22—most of them "lush" treatments of standards like "Autumn Leaves" and "I'll Remember April." Garner, who typically laid down rhythmic chords with his left hand, had a unique way of transforming the tunes into "wedding cakes of cascading melodies and rococo harmonies." The new album upgrades the sound quality too, said George W. Harris in *JazzWeekly.com*. While the 1956 release sounded "a tad distant," the engineers behind the reissue "have done a remarkable job at giving the music a better presence." Backed by bassist Eddie Calhoun and drummer Denzil DaCosta Best, Garner combined "amazing chops with unbridled joy and lyricism." His "infectious" style deserves to be rediscovered.

Ryan Adams

1989

★★★★★



old alt-country singer-songwriter clearly doesn't intend to belittle the starlet. Earlier this year, Adams openly praised Swift's songcraft, and the effort he put into reinterpreting the world's most popular album comes through on every track, "with often startling results." Gone is the pop sheen of Swift's record, generally replaced by coarser guitar work and "aching" vocals that highlight the underlying melancholy in the 25-year-old's lyrics. "If anything, Adams' 1989 is too serious or reverent toward Swift's songs," said Ian Crouch in *NewYorker.com*. He has drained the song collection of its cheeky humor—one of its defining traits. The "blissfully goofy" and danceable track "Shake It Off" isn't quite as lovable when done as a "brooding dirge." Still, Adams "can make anything sound heartbreaking," and in reimagining Swift, he has come up with a batch of music that's "both personal and generous."

Drake & Future

What a Time to Be Alive

★★★★★



When a collaboration occurs between two artists "at the top of their respective games," the results couldn't possibly be bad, said Matthew Ramirez in *Spin.com*. Sure, this surprise release from Drake and Future doesn't present either chart-topping rapper at his best: It was recorded in six days and sounds "a bit slapdash." But *What a Time to Be Alive* is very much the sound of what hip-hop fans are listening to right now, and its several highlights—including "Jumpman" and "Digital Dash"—will still kill when the calendar turns. Too many tracks here, though, are "just Future songs with Drake verses tagged on," said Sheldon Pearce in *Pitchfork.com*. Production was mostly handled by Future's usual collaborator, Metro Boomin, and Drake "often sounds out of his element." In the "slightly watered-down versions" of the stars that we get here, Future continues to bemoan fame while Drake celebrates it. Each artist sounds best on two late solo productions. But "Diamonds Dancing" might be the only collaboration here that "clicks on all cylinders."

The Martian

Directed by Ridley Scott
(PG-13)



A lone astronaut
makes due on Mars.

"An unpretentious popcorn classic that builds to a white-knuckle climax," this nerd-driven space opera is "the best thing that either Matt Damon or director Ridley Scott has done in years," said Lou Lumenick in the *New York Post*. Damon stars as an astronaut-biologist who's left behind on Mars after an aborted mission, and the initial suspense pivots on whether this dorky optimist can stretch his food supply to survive four years before a rescue team can reach him. The tension never lifts as Damon's Mark Watney jury-rigs solutions, but there's also "much more humor than you'd ever expect." Damon gets 75 percent of the



Damon: The DIY-er as hero

screen time, yet he's "never really alone," said Alison Willmore in *BuzzFeed.com*. Watney reestablishes communication with NASA and his colleagues there, and the rescue attempt the team devises turns *The Martian* into "a sprawling, international adventure" populated by "people who are great at and who love their jobs."

A cynic "might call *The Martian* a feature-length advertisement for NASA," said Scott Tobias in *GQ.com*. It's "an ode to problem solving and stick-to-itiveness" that reminds us of the innovations that are possible when smart people work together. The climax plays like "the ultimate nerd triumph."

The Intern

Directed by Nancy Meyers
(PG-13)



A savvy senior excels in an
entry-level web job.

The Intern offers a great example of "why you don't judge a movie by a high-concept poster," said Richard Roeper in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Yes, Robert De Niro plays a retiree who takes an intern position, and yes, Anne Hathaway is his boss. But the two stars actually mesh, and this Nancy Meyers comedy "grows on us from scene to scene." We're skeptical until we're not, and suddenly here we are with two charming Oscar winners, "enjoying the repartee." Still, "for a comedy that presents itself as forward-thinking, *The Intern* is bizarrely retrograde," said Ty Burr in *The Boston*



How celebrities erase a generation gap

Globe. Hathaway's character is the founder of a highly successful e-commerce startup, and we believe in her desire to juggle career success and family. But once De Niro's sage old-timer starts guiding her, the implication becomes "every working woman needs a cuddly Yoda daddy to make it in business." I loved *Something's Gotta Give*,

but even I have to admit that this Nancy Meyers movie is "relatively weightless," said Richard Lawson in *VanityFair.com*. It's "such a nice movie," filled with so many nice people and so little real conflict that "it almost evaporates as it goes."

99 Homes

Directed by Ramin Bahrani
(R)



A housing-crisis victim
joins the predator class.

This "stunningly effective" melodrama set during America's recent housing crisis turns out to be "a scolding look at a society gone astray" that is also "a minor masterpiece of suspense," said A.O. Scott in *The New York Times*. Andrew Garfield and Michael Shannon co-star as a construction worker who loses his home and the ruthless operator who throws him and his family out. When Garfield's Dennis Nash then joins his tormentor on the profit-making side of foreclosures and house flipping, *99 Homes* becomes a Faustian fable lit by a bright, stark anger about "the way the pursuit of wealth has eclipsed all other



Garfield and Shannon in a false Eden

sources of value in our lives." A pair of "flawlessly frightening" performances sells the tale, said Joe Morgenstern in *The Wall Street Journal*. Shannon proves diabolically watchable, while Garfield manages to be a likable "moral chameleon." Even so, the screenplay provides "little room for emotional nuance," said A.A. Dowd in *AVClub.com*.

This is a movie that "wants to get the blood boiling," and its "edge-of-the-seat bombast" dilutes the power of the message it's trying to deliver. It's "a kind of *Wall Street* for the Florida real estate market"—a "hopelessly Hollywood" indictment of today's winner-take-all economy.

New on DVD and Blu-ray**Spy**

(Fox, \$43.50)

"Look out, Bond. Look out, Bourne. Melissa McCarthy has found her franchise," said *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. In this hit summer espionage spoof, the Emmy-winning comedy star was "whip-smart and wacky" as a CIA desk worker picked to lead a high-stakes secret mission in Paris.

A Murder in the Park

(MPI Home Video, \$20)

"Tabloid breathlessness meets advocacy outrage" in this gripping film, said the *Los Angeles Times*. The movie argues that the push to close death row in Illinois hinged on freeing a murder convict who was probably guilty, and you don't have to be pro-capital punishment to be shaken by the tale.

Avengers: Age of Ultron

(Disney, \$15)

There was a new villain (James Spader) and not much of a new story in this blockbuster superhero sequel, said *The Washington Post*. But director Joss Whedon again adopted "a tone of jaunty good fun," and the gifted cast—led by Robert Downey Jr.—reconjured their "prickly" chemistry.

Movies on TV

Monday, Oct. 5
Storm Center

Bette Davis plays a principled librarian who sparks a firestorm in her small town when she refuses to yank a book that promotes communism. (1956) 10:45 p.m., GetTV

Tuesday, Oct. 6
Gravity

Sandra Bullock and George Clooney are astronauts determined to return to Earth after their space shuttle is destroyed. (2013) 6:20 p.m., HBO

Wednesday, Oct. 7
Brokeback Mountain

Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger strike up a rugged romance in Ang Lee's Oscar-winning adaptation of a short story by E. Annie Proulx. (2005) 4 p.m., Ovation

Thursday, Oct. 8
Girlfriends

Two young women in Ed Koch-era New York City struggle to achieve artistic success and personal happiness in this independent comedy-drama from the filmmaker who now directs Lena Dunham in *Girls*. (1978) 10 p.m., TCM

Friday, Oct. 9
The Court Jester

Danny Kaye plays an acrobat who infiltrates the court of an evil would-be English king in this clever musical send-up of Old Hollywood swashbucklers. (1956) 12:55 p.m., Movieplex

Saturday, Oct. 10
The Lavender Hill Mob

Alec Guinness stars as a mild-mannered bank clerk who engineers an ambitious heist, melting gold bullion into tourist trinkets to move the haul from London to Paris. (1951) 10 p.m., TCM

Sunday, Oct. 11
Sideways

Drink no Merlot while viewing this fine comedy about two men whose midlife crises peak during a trip through California wine country. Paul Giamatti and Thomas Haden Church star. (2004) 8 p.m., Encore

The Week's guide to what's worth watching

American Horror Story: Hotel

Welcome to the Hotel Cortez, a haunt that takes its design cues from art deco and Swiss surrealist H.R. Giger. As *American Horror Story*, an acclaimed anthology series, launches a new saga, expect plenty of camp and plenty of vamp. Lady Gaga will play the Countess, the hotel's bloodthirsty owner, while Denis O'Hare will be a cross-dressing barkeep nicknamed Liz Taylor. *Wednesday, Oct. 7, at 10 p.m., FX*

Red Oaks

In TV comedies, the '80s are back. Amazon's newest original series is a Steven Soderbergh production, but its mise-en-scène is straight-up John Hughes. There's much to like here, especially Craig Roberts, who plays the protagonist, a young man working as an assistant tennis pro at a country club in the New Jersey suburbs. Paul Reiser and Gage Golightly co-star. *Available for streaming Friday, Oct. 9, Amazon*

Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom

Filmmaker Evgeny Afineevsky had cameras on the ground in 2014 Kiev when a government crackdown on peaceful protests triggered violent revolt. In this visceral documentary, video that was shot with handhelds and smartphones by 28 different contributors puts viewers in the middle of the melee. *Winter on Fire* simplifies the dynamics behind the crisis in Ukraine, but next to 2013's Cairo-set *The Square*, it's as powerful a document of contemporary revolution as you'll find. *Available for streaming Friday, Oct. 9, Netflix*

The Last Kingdom

If *Game of Thrones* has a historical analog, it might be 9th-century England. Sure—no dragons. But those Vikings were invaders fierce enough to topple every Saxon kingdom but one. In this new series based on Bernard Cornwell's *Saxon Stories* novels, hope among the natives lies with an orphaned noble (Alexander Dreymon) who was raised by the occupying Danes but chooses to throw his good looks and fighting skills in with potential unifier Alfred the Great. *Saturday, Oct. 10, at 10 p.m., BBC America*



Dreymon: A hero arrives in The Last Kingdom.

The Walking Dead

The zombies keep walking, and Rick Grimes and company keep on keepin' on. Season 6 of this Nielsen phenomenon begins in Alexandria, Va., where Grimes' small band of survivors have found refuge in a walled-off suburban enclave but are frightening the locals, who've not yet had to take a warlike stance against the zombie hordes. Meanwhile, a hostile group of survivors known as the Wolves appears to be closing in. *Sunday, Oct. 11, at 9 p.m., AMC*

Other highlights**The Flash**

The scarlet speedster pushes into alternative universes in Season 2 of this enthusiastically received DC Comics series. *Tuesday, Oct. 6, at 8 p.m., the CW*

Nova: Secrets of Noah's Ark

Following instructions from a 3,700-year-old clay tablet, expert ship builders construct an ark to gain insights into the Bible's Great Flood story. *Wednesday, Oct. 7, at 9 p.m., PBS; check local listings*

Billy on the Street

Comedian Billy Eichner begins a new season of quizzing New Yorkers for his improvised game show. Look for cameos by Chris Pratt, Tina Fey, and Julianne Moore. *Thursday, Oct. 8, at 10:30 p.m., TruTV*

Show of the week
Prophet's Prey

Among life's true horror stories, the tale of Warren Jeffs holds special rank. Jeffs, who today sits in prison, inherited control of a fundamentalist Mormon sect 13 years ago and then grossly abused his power. In this chilling documentary, filmmaker Amy Berg uses the testimony of ex-members and the spade work of author Jon Krakauer to argue that Jeffs eventually took 78 wives, enriched himself on child slave labor, and made a ritual of raping girls as young as 12. The evidence is sickening, especially because Jeffs still appears to control nearly 10,000 lives. *Saturday, Oct. 10, at 9 p.m., Showtime*



A portrait of Jeffs, plus wives by the dozens

LEISURE

Food & Drink

Lomo saltado: Peruvian comfort food done right

When I need comfort food at the end of a rough day, “*lomo saltado* is still the dish that does it for me,” said chef Ricardo Zarate in *The Fire of Peru*. When done right, the classic beef stir-fry tastes both filling and healthy, “like a big, warm, and cozy salad.” Too many versions, though, are prepared wrong—cooked slowly over low heat, which makes them more like stews than stir-fries.

Ingredients matter, too. *Lomo* means “loin” in Spanish, and if you don’t buy filet mignon, the cut traditionally used in Peru, at least choose another cut from the tenderloin. A few other components should be prepared ahead. Pureed garlic can be made in batches (1½ cups of peeled garlic purees nicely with 3 tbsp of water). The *saltado* sauce, a seasoning I created for my line chefs in Los Angeles, keeps for about a week and requires a paste (store-bought or otherwise) made from *aji amarillo*, one of Peru’s workhorse chile peppers.

The key, in the end, is to fry everything at high heat in two minutes or less. You can spoon the stir-fry over rice, but it’s traditionally served on top of deep-fried or skillet-fried potatoes. You can also roast the potatoes, or “go all out” and confit them in olive oil.



Think two minutes from start to finish.

Recipe of the week

Lomo saltado

8 to 10 oz filet mignon, thinly sliced into 2-inch-long strips
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
½ tsp pureed garlic
2 to 3 tbsp canola or other neutral oil
½ medium red onion, sliced lengthwise into ½-inch-thick strips
1 ripe medium tomato, or 2 plum tomatoes, halved and cut into large chunks
1½ tbsp soy sauce, preferably high-quality Japanese

1½ tbsp saltado sauce (see below)
2 scallions, white and light green parts only, finely chopped
3 or 4 sprigs fresh cilantro, leaves and tender stems only, finely chopped

Sprinkle beef lightly with salt and pepper and rub with pureed garlic. Heat a wok or large sauté pan over high heat until very hot, 2 minutes. Lightly coat bottom of pan with oil and heat until hot but not smoking, 2 minutes. Add beef and cook, tossing, until lightly browned, 30 seconds. Add onion and toss a few times. Add tomatoes and cook until onion is lightly colored and tomatoes begin to soften, 30 seconds. Drizzle soy and saltado sauces along the edges of wok. You should smell the sauces caramelizing. Add scallions

and cilantro and toss to combine. Taste and drizzle more soy sauce, if needed. Spoon into serving bowls over potatoes or rice. Serves 2.

Saltado sauce

In a jar, combine 5 tbsp red wine vinegar with 2 tbsp high-quality Japanese soy sauce (or 1½ tbsp tamari), 2 tbsp pureed garlic, 2 tbsp pureed or finely zested ginger, 1 tbsp *aji amarillo* paste, and 2 tsp freshly ground black pepper. Shake to combine. Cover and refrigerate for up to one week.

Bourbon: The benefits of age

A young bourbon can be a good bourbon, but “you can definitely taste what a few extra years in a barrel can do,” said Jonah Flicker in *Paste.com*. Most major brands sell older expressions of their signature whiskeys, and although those spirits cost more, many of them—including these three—merit the price bump.

Jim Beam Signature Craft 12 Year (\$40). Everyday Jim Beam remains “one of the best no-frills bourbons you can buy,” and the 12-year has the same nutty nose but “deeper and richer” taste.

Bulleit 10 (\$45). Bulleit’s fine six-year-old bourbon becomes, at 10, “something really special.” The brand’s rye-heavy blend generates bold flavor, and the nose is “all butterscotch and oak.”

Wild Turkey Master’s Keep (\$150). Wild Turkey is always good, but this 17-year-old version is “outstanding,” its palate “slightly sugared with vanilla and caramel hints.”



The new wine shop: Where ‘To go or stay?’ is a real question

The wine community is learning to kick back, said Chantal Martineau in *FoodRepublic.com*. In cities across the country, ambitious wine shops are popping up that have carved out areas where customers can open and enjoy their purchases at a bar or table, often alongside serious food. Even in New York City, where law requires that a wall divide retail sales from table service, a new Garment District business called Wine Disciples is pleasantly blurring the line between wine bar and wine shop—and becoming a hangout for sommeliers.

Tofino Wines San Francisco. The recipe here: “Take a 2,500-square-foot space with 20-foot ceilings, fill it with more than 700 wines, and add a bar area for quiet enjoyment of the aforementioned.” Tofino keeps more than 30 wines on tap, charges a \$10 corkage fee to open any bottle from the shelves, and offers a menu of small plates like smoked trout pâté and *pan tomate*. 2696 Geary Blvd., (415) 872-5782

Oso Market + Bar Portland, Ore. The white-tiled bar at this wine market encourages experimentation by selling customized flights of wine at just \$14 to \$15. You can pair the wines with a full meal, or with small bites like *montaditos* (Spanish mini sandwiches). 726 S.E. Grand Ave., (503) 232-6400

Market Street Grocery Pittsburgh. This gourmet butcher, grocery, coffee shop, and wine bar sells and serves wine from a single winery, Collefrisio, of Abruzzo, Italy. “Luckily, the winery is rather prolific, producing several whites, including a bright and fruity Falanghina, a fresh and floral Montepulciano rosé, and even bubbly.” They’re available by the bottle or by the glass, served with cheeses or charcuterie. 435 Market St., (412) 281-3818



The bar at Oso Market

This week's dream: Aveyron—a forgotten corner of southern France

The products made by the artisans of Aveyron are celebrated around the world, said Elaine Sciolino in *Travel + Leisure*. This rural French region is the home of Roquefort cheese, Laguiole folding pocketknives, and Millau gloves. “Yet Aveyron itself is arguably the least-known part of France.” Scarred by conquests, it was for centuries a poor farming area, and “those who didn’t leave were determined to preserve what they had and to keep away outsiders.” No high-speed train crosses Aveyron even today, and this has allowed it to “retain the quiet beauty of a distant era.” You can spend days winding along narrow roads past Roman ruins, fairy-tale castles, and seldom-visited hillside villages. “By the end, you will feel as if you own this swath of France.”

My husband and I seemed to be the only foreigners at the Sunday morning market in the town of Marcillac, in Aveyron’s wine country. Butchers sold blocks of cured ham and bakers tempted us with samples of

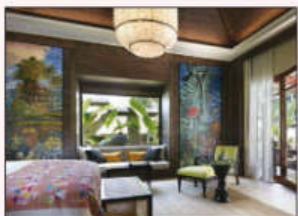


A view of Abbaye Ste.-Foy

fouace—an orange-perfumed brioche. A short drive north brought us to the walled medieval village of Conques and its grand Abbaye Ste.-Foy. Above the entrance to this magnificent Romanesque structure is a large frieze depicting the Last Judgment. On one side, the saved ascend to heaven. On the other, the damned—including a bare-breasted adulteress and a liar whose tongue is being cut off—fall into hellfire.

A taste of heaven can be experienced at Aveyron’s only Michelin three-star restaurant, Le Suquet, which “looks like a metal-and-glass spaceship hanging precariously on the edge of a cliff over the Aubrac plateau.” One signature dish, the *gargouillou*, is a burst of color and flavor made from 50 kinds of flowers, herbs, seeds, and vegetables. Yet such delicate, intellectual fare left me hungry for authentic Aveyronnais cooking. So we headed one day to Chez Marinette, in the village of Le Fel (population 156), where we lunched on foie gras and juicy roast chicken. “I hadn’t experienced a Proustian moment of memory before then.” But as I sipped a local wine that carried the taste of the region’s volcanic soil, I was transported back to my childhood in Buffalo, and my grandfather’s kitchen table. “I was drinking the same tannic, volcanic wine he made every summer in our backyard.” At Le Suquet’s hotel in Laguiole (*bras.fr*), doubles start at \$520.

Hotel of the week



An art-draped villa

Ritz-Carlton Mandapa Ubud, Bali

This luxury retreat in Bali’s spiritual capital is the perfect place to revitalize your body and soul, said Elaine Glusac in *The New York Times*. Modeled after a traditional Balinese village, the resort spreads 60 spacious suites and villas around a terraced rice field located on the majestic Ayung River. The centerpiece is an eight-treatment-room spa where guests can book a session with a Balinese healer and take yoga classes in a riverside studio. Four restaurants and lounges serve detox-friendly dishes, and much of the produce is sourced from an onsite organic garden. ritzcarlton.com; doubles from \$445

Getting the flavor of...

Plugged-in Chattanooga

Built in the belly of the rocky Tennessee River Gorge, Chattanooga has long drawn adventure travelers, said Graham Averill in *Outside*. Climbers have been scaling the nearby sandstone cliffs for more than 30 years, and in the past decade the local mountain biking club has built 120 miles of single track close to town. “Now the city itself has caught up with the surrounding action.” Tech startups and new coffee shops, breweries, and record stores are sprouting in neighborhoods across town. Residents say the boom started in 2010 when Chattanooga launched a taxpayer-owned 1-gigabyte-per-second broadband network. The city’s mix of web infrastructure, nightlife, and outdoor fun has attracted people like brothers Kelsey and Connor Scott, who relocated from Nashville to grow their backpack business. “Moving to Chattanooga just made sense,” says Kelsey. “We were already driving down here every weekend to climb.”

A once noisy Puerto Rican island

The island of Culebra boasts some of the world’s most beautiful, pristine beaches—just mind the bombs, said Erin Williams in *The Washington Post*. The U.S. military used this isle off the east coast of Puerto Rico for gunnery practice until the 1970s, and today it’s scattered with signs that warn, “Explosives: unexploded ordinance.” My husband and I weren’t scared off, though, and recently headed to the relatively undeveloped island for a long weekend. Culebra’s most famous site is the “undeniably gorgeous” Flamenco Beach, a mile-long white crescent hugging a clear, calm bay. Guidebooks mention the trail to nearby Carlos Rosario Beach, but a Danger sign blocks the way. After a park ranger assured us the route was safe, we walked down the well-trodden path and emerged onto an empty beach with azure waters. “Later, a dozen other visitors would join us, but for now, we had our own little piece of the Caribbean.”

Last-minute travel deals

A cruise for crab lovers

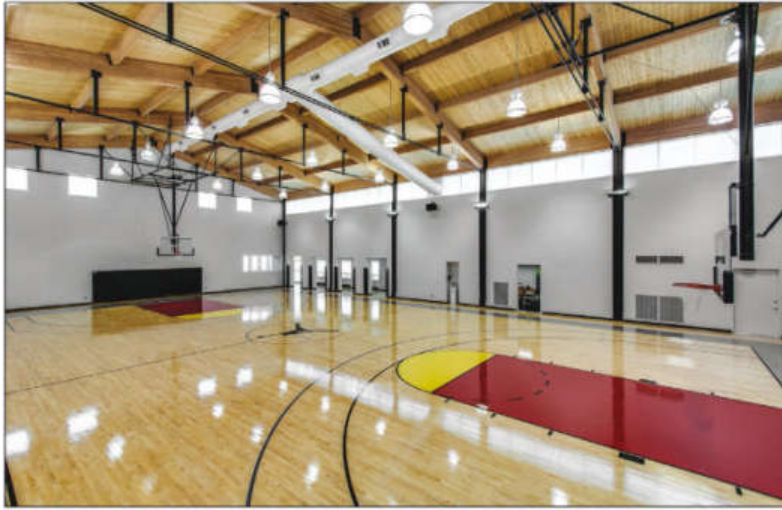
Feast on blue crab as you float around Chesapeake Bay with American Cruise Lines. A weeklong Crabfest cruise leaves Baltimore Nov. 1 and makes eight stops along the bay. Book by Oct. 26 and save \$1,000 per stateroom. americancruiselines.com

Fly-fishing in Colorado

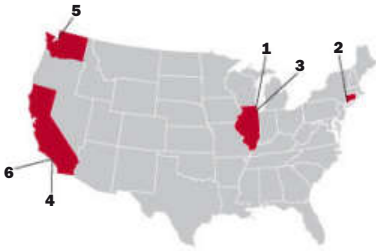
Spend two nights at Colorado’s Antlers at Vail condo hotel and enjoy a complimentary guided fly-fishing trip and a whiskey tasting for two. The package costs \$324 a person, representing nearly a \$300 discount, and the offer runs through Nov. 15. antlersvail.com

Cycling the Danube

Take an eight-day bicycle trip down the Danube River Valley from the German town of Passau to Vienna. The \$700 package includes bike rental, hotel accommodations, and a luggage transfer service. Available through Oct. 17. biketours.com

This week: Home-court advantage

1 ▲ Highland Park, Ill. This nine-bedroom estate is the former home of basketball legend Michael Jordan. The 56,000-square-foot house has 15 baths and a full-size, NBA-quality court built to Jordan's specifications with his logo at center court. Other amenities include a fitness center, a tennis court, a putting green, an outdoor kitchen, and a circular infinity pool. \$14,855,000. Kofi Natei Nartey, the Agency, (424) 230-3756



2 ► Redding, Conn. Built in 1992 in the style of an 18th-century colonial, this five-bedroom estate is set on 9 acres about an hour north of New York City. The home includes reclaimed wide-plank floors, hand-forged nails, and wrought-iron details. The property features a basketball court, a large barn, a tennis court, a one-bedroom guesthouse, and a pool with a pool house. \$2,950,000. Ryan Cornell, William Pitt/Sotheby's International Realty, (203) 200-0203



3 ▲ Burr Ridge, Ill. Set on 5 acres, this four-bedroom house has a full-size indoor basketball court. The interior also features a locker room, a batting cage, and a great room with wood trusses. The property includes a large patio and a pond. \$3,950,000. Dawn McKenna, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, (630) 546-3763

4 ► Encino, Calif. Built in 2015, this six-bedroom home is in the “south of the boulevard” neighborhood. The interior has French doors, a master suite with a large walk-in closet, and a chef’s kitchen. The 0.71-acre property features a full-size court with night lighting, a pool, and a cabana. \$4,495,000. Jonathan Azal, Fortune Realty Co./Top Agent Network, (800) 956-1986



5 ▲ Mercer Island, Wash. This six-bedroom house on the south end of the island offers views of Mt. Rainier. Around the corner from the Seattle Seahawks’ practice facilities, the home has a hidden basketball court on the lower level. Features include marble floors, an outdoor hot tub, multiple balconies, and a master bedroom with a spa bath. \$4,698,000. Becky Gray, Realogics/Sotheby’s International Realty, (206) 605-1927



6 ▲ Malibu, Calif. Lying on 1.5 acres, this three-bedroom adobe house offers mountain and

canyon views. The interior features tile floors and a great room with plenty of natural light and a fireplace. The property includes a half-court for hoops, a two-story guesthouse, and beach and tennis club rights. \$2,700,000. Katie Bentzen, Partners Trust, (310) 804-8423

The 2016 Smart ForTwo: What the critics say

Autoblog.com

The Smart ForTwo will never be beloved in America, but it “doesn’t outright suck to drive anymore.” That’s big news for a two-seat get-about that arrived in the U.S. in 2008 offering unimpressive fuel economy, a cheap-looking cabin, and a “horrible” transmission—maybe “the worst ever.” The new edition has grown wider and roomier and is handsome inside and out. On the road, the car is now “composed and confident,” and “in some ways, it’s kind of fun.”

Autoweek

If ease of parking is a key criteria, “you’ll be impressed.” This ForTwo needs only

23 feet to complete a circle, and it’s still short enough to occupy a parking space sideways. Outside city limits, performance surprises. Though the turbocharged, three-cylinder engine needs 10.1 seconds to push the car from 0 to 60 mph, the ForTwo is now “a relaxed, quiet freeway car” with enough power in reserve for passing.

Jalopnik.com

The new, and much improved, automatic will be the transmission of choice for most buyers, but the base model’s five-speed manual makes the car “much more sprightly.” The ForTwo is still a niche product, not even able to hit the 40 mpg highway mark



A far more competent little bug, from \$14,650

that larger cars have managed. It’s gotten “way, way better,” though, and “it looks ready to tussle, in a fun way.”

The best of...lazy weekends



Bambüsi by Belmint Bathtub Caddy

“Never worry about dropping your book or cellphone while you’re enjoying a relaxing bubble bath anymore.” The width of the tray is adjustable, and a built-in stand can hold a book in reading position.

\$50, amazon.com

Source: Materialicious.com



Felix Lounger

This stylish, versatile adult-size beanbag adds “an instantly casual aura” to any room, and it makes a great perch for relaxed reading or a quick power nap. The coated canvas shell can hold up even to use on a porch or terrace.

\$377, fancy.com

Source: HiConsumption.com



Blue Apron Delivery

“Dinnertime just got more fun.” Blue Apron, a leader in the growing boxed-meal business, recently added wine to its delivery service. Now you don’t have to decide what’s for dinner—or what to drink with it.

\$66 a month with a weekly meal plan, blueapron.com

Source: Fast Company



Chef’n Pop Top Popping Platter

Discover “a newfangled way to make an old favorite.” Simply place popcorn kernels in this BPA-free silicone basket, close its origami-like top, and microwave until the popcorn pushes open the lid.

\$20, bedbathandbeyond.com

Source: Real Simple



Amazon Kindle Paperwhite

The new Paperwhite is “a fantastic value.” Its upgraded screen is incredibly sharp, battery life is excellent, and page turns are snappier than ever. It’s now “the right e-book reader for most people.”

From \$119, amazon.com

Source: PCMag.com

Tip of the week...

Five great ‘natural supplements’

■ **Green tea.** An antioxidant in green tea boosts metabolism and thus helps burn fat. The tea can be your caffeine source, too, and it has proven memory-enhancing powers.

■ **Chia seeds.** Chia seeds slow glucose absorption, so they limit spikes in blood sugar. They also soak up 10 times their weight in liquid, which helps keep you hydrated while they’re in your digestive system.

■ **Beets.** Beets lower blood pressure and increase oxygen efficiency, which is why endurance athletes love them.

■ **Watercress.** Recent research crowned watercress “the most nutrient-rich food in your local produce aisle.”

■ **Acai berries and other superfruits.** Blackberries and cranberries have high anti-oxidant levels, but acai berries top both. Apple skins contain the anti-inflammatory quercetin, while plums normalize blood sugar levels and pomegranates fight cholesterol buildup.

Source: Men’s Fitness

And for those who have everything...

“Talk about fulfilling a candy crush.” In a cheeky update of the signet rings worn by the elite for centuries, jewelry designer David Yurman has unveiled a limited-edition line of **Bubblegum Pinky Rings**. Available in five bubblegum colors, the rings are made of resin and 18-karat gold, so they’re inedible. But the resin is scented, to evoke bubblegum, cotton candy, spearmint, licorice, or grape. Pop singer Rita Ora and *Scream* *Queens* star Emma Roberts have been spotted sporting the look, but more-mature women could pull it off too. “The grown-up ring pop is here.”

\$875, davidyurman.com

Source: Nylon



Best apps...

For music instruction

■ **Music Tutor (Sight Reading Improver)** helps you hone the ability to read music. It assumes you understand the basics but need drilling. It runs tests up to 10 minutes long, then lets you review what you got wrong (iOS only, \$2 without ads). For Android phones, **MusicTutor Sight Read Lite** is the rough equivalent.

■ **Piano Dust Buster** teaches the basics of piano playing and is designed for kids. You can either use an on-screen keyboard or a real piano: The free iOS-only app uses the mic on your iPhone or iPad to hear you and makes a game of your attempts to play songs written by everyone from Beethoven to Taylor Swift.

■ **Piano Teacher** also lets users play along to a variety of songs. This free Android app includes the option of adjusting your phone’s tone to imitate an organ, guitar, or any of 126 other instruments.

Source: The New York Times

The news at a glance

The bottom line

■ Gas now costs less than \$3 per gallon in every state except Alaska, where the average price is \$3.02. Even so, Alaskans are paying about 90 cents less per gallon than they did a year ago. Nationally, a gallon of gas averages \$2.29, down from \$3.34 a year ago.
Time.com

■ North America has officially run out of IPv4 addresses, the most commonly used Internet Protocol numbers that identify every machine connected to the internet. Though the shortage will have little to no effect on ordinary web users, companies with web presences will have to speed their migration to IPv6's successor, IPv6, which provides 340 undecillion addresses (undecillion = 1 followed by 36 zeroes) to IPv4's 4 billion.
Wired.com

■ Despite predictions that e-books would overtake print by 2015, sales of digital books actually fell 10 percent during the first five months of this year. E-books made up 20 percent of the market in 2014, roughly the same proportion that they did

several years ago.
The New York Times

■ Apple sold 13 million iPhone 6S and 6S Plus devices during the first three days of sales, a new record for the company. Apple sold 10 million iPhones over the same period a year ago, when the previous models hit stores.
CNET.com

■ Facebook suffered a 40-minute outage Monday, its second in a week. Based on the company's \$3.83 billion in advertising revenue in the second quarter, the social network loses slightly more than \$1.7 million for every hour its app and website aren't working.
TheStreet.com

Energy: Shell quits the Alaskan Arctic

Royal Dutch Shell is ending its "expensive and fruitless" nine-year search for offshore oil in the Alaskan Arctic, said Clifford Krauss and Stanley Reed in *The New York Times*, in another sign that the energy industry "is trimming its ambitions in the wake of collapsing oil prices." Shell has invested some \$7 billion over the past decade exploring for oil in Alaska's Chukchi and Beaufort seas, an effort that has been beset by accidents and regulatory hurdles and ferociously opposed by environmental groups. Shell has long assured its investors that the "potential bonanza" would be worth the expense, but with oil prices stubbornly low, the company decided to "pull the plug."



A drilling rig run aground in Alaska

Shell's abrupt announcement "is surprising for several reasons," said Paul Barrett in *Bloomberg.com*. As recently as August, Shell executives expressed confidence that there were up to 15 billion barrels of oil beneath their first Arctic well, and said that if oil prices were back up to \$110 a barrel by 2030, the Alaskan project "would be a huge winner." But if prices stayed at \$50, "the offshore adventure would be for naught." In recent weeks, Shell appears to have "lost some of its bravado." Energy executives across the industry now worry lower prices could last for years, especially if the Iran nuclear deal leads to a flood of new oil on global markets.

Fashion: Ralph Lauren hands reins to an outsider

Ralph Lauren is stepping aside as CEO of his fashion empire, said Ray Smith and Suzanne Kapner in *The Wall Street Journal*. Lauren, 75, announced this week he is passing control of his company to 41-year-old Stefan Larsson, a veteran of fast-fashion brand H&M and Gap's downmarket brand Old Navy, which Larsson is credited with reviving. Ralph Lauren, which had \$7.6 billion in sales across its fashion and home furnishing lines in 2014, has seen sales and profits sag this year, and investors have pushed for better performance in both the luxury apparel and mass retail markets.

Manufacturing: Alcoa breaks up amid aluminum glut

The world's third-largest producer of aluminum is splitting in two, said Sonja Elmquist in *Bloomberg.com*. "A symbol of American industrial might through the 20th century," Alcoa will separate its traditional aluminum operation, which has been battered by the global collapse in commodities prices, from its growing manufacturing business making parts for cars and airplanes. It's a bold and "potentially risky" move for the 127-year-old company, with some investors saying commodities prices will eventually rebound. About half of all aluminum production is losing money at current prices because of a glut of the metal worldwide.

Food: Whole Foods slims down

Whole Foods is slashing jobs in order to "reposition itself" in the fast-changing grocery business, said Sarah Halzack in *The Washington Post*. The company will cut 1,500 jobs as part of an effort to lower prices for customers. The company is fighting off a host of new competitors, with Kroger, Walmart, and Target all adding their own organic product lines and Trader Joe's and Sprouts Farmers Market rapidly expanding. Whole Foods stock is down 38 percent this year, a sign investors are unconvinced the company has a strategy for growth.

Economy: Consumer confidence unexpectedly up

Americans appear to be taking the volatile financial markets in stride, said Paul Wiseman in the Associated Press. The U.S. consumer confidence index increased to 103 in September, its highest point since January. Economists expected consumer confidence to fall following news of the economic slowdown in China and steep sell-offs on Wall Street. But more than 25 percent of Americans said jobs were plentiful, the highest share since September 2007, and more Americans also said they were planning to buy cars and homes over the next six months.

Home-brewed Coca-Cola

Struggling coffee company Keurig Green Mountain has a plan to "tempt lukewarm buyers": homemade soda, said Mary Bowerman in *USA Today*. Keurig, best known for single-serve coffee pods, this week began selling a machine that makes single-serve soda and carbonated beverages at home, including Coke, Dr. Pepper, and Sprite. Keurig Kold, which retails for \$369.99, relies on the same pod technology that powers the company's coffee brewers; users fill the machine's water tank, then insert a two-chambered pod—part carbonation, part syrup—to create a specific drink, such as Coke. It's Keurig's latest attempt to diversify beyond coffee in a bid to reverse declining sales. Last month, the company partnered with Campbell's Soup to make single-serve soup pods. If buying separate devices for soup and soda sounds pricey, the company says it's working on a machine that can make both.

Personal finance: Should 20-somethings save?

"I don't have any savings," said Lauren Martin in *EliteDaily.com*, and I couldn't care less. In fact, I strongly believe that "if you have savings in your 20s, you're doing something wrong." Until recently, I had been frantic to save money, rarely eating at restaurants or going out with friends. I was too busy stressing about saving instead of "savoring my youth." But then a very successful friend gave me a piece of advice: "Don't save money. Make more money." So now I spend without guilt. My 20s are for taking risks and enjoying life, not sacrificing to contribute to a 401(k). We Millennials are on different schedules than our parents were on at our age, from getting married to having kids to buying houses. "We're not trying to live with safety nets." We want to bet all our chips and reach higher. Putting aside "\$200 a month isn't going to make the dent that a \$60,000 pay raise will after spending all those nights out networking."

This advice is "jaw-droppingly wrong," said L.V. Anderson in *Slate.com*. Martin wants to pretend that a few dollars saved now won't help her retire some day. Has she really never heard of compound interest? She also insists that spending money today somehow translates into confidence and professional success. But "it's not lack of a belief in oneself that's stand-



Live for today, but don't forget about tomorrow.

ing between Millennials and \$60,000 raises." It's the fact that wages have been utterly stagnant for years, while the cost of education, housing, health care, and basically everything else has gone up. You simply "don't want to get to your 30s or 40s and find you have no money in the bank," said Timothy Lee in *Vox.com*. The days when you'll have kids and mortgages and sick parents may seem like a lifetime away when you're 25, but "they are closer than you think. Sorry."

Martin is right that taking risks in your 20s is "an undeniably great idea," said Susie Poppick in *Time.com*. But spending your paycheck on overpriced drinks at a club in the name of "networking" is not the same as buying computer-coding or foreign language lessons that will actually help you score that raise and promotion. And just because retirement is decades away and you're happy to rent forever doesn't mean you won't face unexpected costs tomorrow, said Shane Ferro in *HuffingtonPost.com*. You might lose a job, need a new apartment immediately, or have an unexpected medical bill. Everyone needs an emergency fund, and "saving for big things takes time." So spend what you need to in your 20s. "Just don't spend so much that it kills your quality of life in your 30s. (And 40s. And 50s.)"

What the experts say

The challenges of new charities

Launching a charity is a noble endeavor, said Veronica Dagher in *The Wall Street Journal*. But passion and ambition will get you only so far. Many people underestimate how long it will take to receive tax-exempt status. Registering with state authorities and the IRS can take as long as six to nine months, and accepting donations during that time is complicated. Another big mistake is putting family members on the board, "just because it's easy" or seems fun. It's smarter to find outside board members with legal or fundraising skills who can advance the organization's work and mission. And, most crucially, do your homework first. "Find out if there are charities with similar missions, and research them thoroughly before deciding there is always room for one more."

The latest workplace perk

Student loan assistance is becoming the new 401(k) match, said Shelly Banjo in *Oz.com*. As competition for highly skilled workers heats up, companies are increasingly offering to help workers and prospective employees pay down college debts. Student loan repayment programs now appear as a perk in thousands of postings on job search site Indeed.com. Global consultancy Pricewaterhouse

Coopers announced a student loan forgiveness program last week, providing junior employees with as much as \$1,200 a year for up to six years toward their student loans. Credit Suisse has teamed up with online lender SoFi to offer a 0.25 percent interest rate reduction to employees who refinance their student loans. This benefit "attracts employees to the bank," said Elizabeth Donnelly, a global HR managing director at Credit Suisse.

How to help kids invest

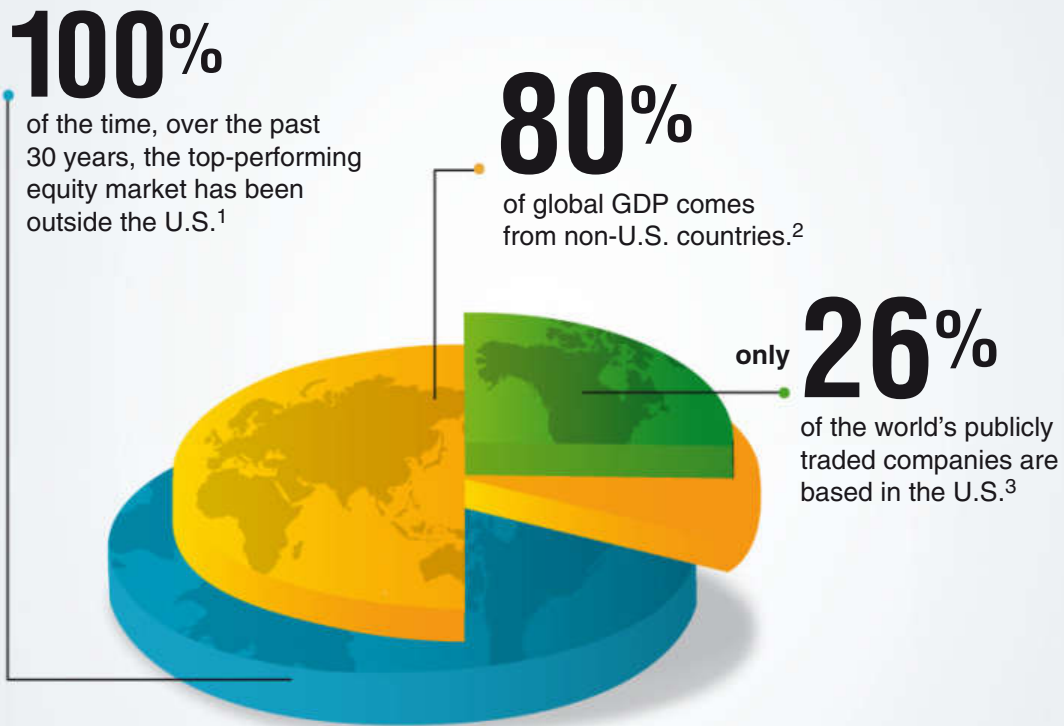
It used to be that parents could put gift money in a savings account "to teach their children about the magic of compound interest," said Sandra Block in *Kiplinger.com*. But in our era of zero percent interest rates, "you'll want to find other ways to invest the money." First, set up a custodial account through a brokerage firm or mutual fund. You can invest in anything from stocks to ETFs, as long as you meet the firm's investment minimums. Some companies, like TD Ameritrade, offer custodial accounts with no investment minimum and lots of no-transaction-fee funds. But "watch out for taxes." The first \$1,050 of interest, dividends, and capital gains is tax free; the next \$1,050 is taxed at the child's rate. Anything above \$2,100 is taxed at the parents' rate.

Charity of the week

Bladder cancer is one of the most common cancers in American men, affecting 1 in 26 in their lifetime. Founded in 2005, the **Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network (bcn.org)** is the only national advocacy organization dedicated to advancing bladder cancer research and supporting victims of the disease. The organization's annual Bladder Cancer Think Tank conference is the only annual meeting of its kind, and allows oncologists and urologists from around the world to better collaborate on prevention and treatments. BCAN also provides thousands of patients, caregivers, and doctors with the resources and support services they need, such as handbooks, webinars, and specialized educational "tool kits" from other patients to help them learn more about the disease. The Young Investigator Awards provide young scientists with \$100,000 research grants in order to work on innovative bladder cancer treatments.

Each charity we feature has earned a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator, which rates not-for-profit organizations on the strength of their finances, their governance practices, and the transparency of their operations. Four stars is the group's highest rating.

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¹Source: MSCI All Country benchmark returns 1983–2013.

²Source: Gross domestic product based on purchasing-power-parity (PPP) share of world total. IMF, Haver Analytics.

³Source: FactSet as of 11/30/2013. Data presented for the MSCI AC World Index, which represents 44 countries and contains 2,436 stocks. The index is not intended to represent the entire global universe of tradable securities.

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Issue of the week: What was Volkswagen thinking?

Volkswagen's scheme to cheat on emissions tests is "shaping up as one of the great corporate scandals of the age," said **Danny Hakim, Aaron Kessler, and Jack Ewing** in *The New York Times*. The German automaker has admitted it installed sophisticated software in millions of diesel vehicles that allowed the cars to spew far more pollutants than regulations allowed; it now faces billions of dollars in fines, lawsuits from governments and consumers around the world, and a criminal investigation into ex-CEO Martin Winterkorn and other VW executives by German prosecutors. What led Volkswagen down this dark path? "Unbridled ambition." For years, VW has been on a mission to overtake Toyota as the world's largest automaker. Part of this strategy involved a big bet on diesel-powered cars, which VW pitched with a promise of "high mileage and low emissions without sacrificing performance"—a crucial selling point in winning over American drivers, who favor big, powerful cars. VW's insular corporate culture and "clannish board" also deserve their fair share of blame, said **James Stewart**, also in the *Times*. The company has for years been dominated by the Porsche and Piëch families, who rarely allow outside views to penetrate. Their often dysfunctional governance, plus "a deep-rooted hostility to environmental regulations" among the company's engineers, made a cheating scandal "all but inevitable."

"It's not just Volkswagen," said **Jason Karaian** in *Qz.com*. Auto manufacturers have been cheating on emissions tests for years, though most of the dishonesty doesn't sink to the level of illegality. The International Council on Clean Transportation said this year that carbon dioxide emissions in European road tests are



New VW CEO Matthias Müller

typically some 40 percent higher than the official amounts certified in the lab. The gap was less than 10 percent in 2001. Why the growing discrepancy? Automakers have found lots of "perfectly legal ways" to pass emissions and fuel efficiency tests, from overinflating tires on test models to taping up doors and grills to improve aerodynamics. In that wink-wink regulatory environment, what's perhaps most shocking is that VW "was brazen enough to thwart tests in the way it did." Take note, companies: "The most dangerous three-word phrase in business is 'Everyone does it,'" said **John Gapper** in the *Financial Times*. It may be conventional to bend regulations, or take cues from rivals about what you can get away with. But "when the backlash comes, it comes with a vengeance."

"We should be outraged" by VW's behavior, said **Edward Queen** in *NewRepublic.com*. "But we should not be shocked." For decades, business schools have taught that the only duty of a corporation is return on investment. When this lesson is taken as gospel, it "drives tsunamis of corporate malfeasance." I have a hard time believing that Winterkorn sanctioned this elaborate deception, "not because it was so dishonest, but because it was so risky," said **Brian Dickerson** in the *Detroit Free Press*. Others find it impossible to believe that a company as micromanaged as Volkswagen could have hatched such an "audacious fraud" without the "explicit permission, or at least the passive complicity" of executives. No matter who knew what, Volkswagen's actions demonstrate a "sick corporate culture" that values short-term profits over safety and customer satisfaction. This is one automaker that must be rebuilt "from the bottom up."

The truth about mistakes

Lucy Kellaway
Financial Times

When did failure become a badge of honor? asked Lucy Kellaway. UBS chief executive Sergio Ermotti won plaudits from Wall Street last week for telling his bankers that it's OK to make mistakes, as long as they are honest mistakes. A culture in which employees are too scared to take risks doesn't help the bank or its clients, he explained. How mature and refreshing, came the response. "But it wasn't mature. It was mad." Sure, people shouldn't be punished for the slightest slipups. But we also shouldn't tell bankers that it is fine to screw up. "This mistake-loving nonsense is an export from Silicon Valley, where 'fail

fast and fail often' is what passes for wisdom." Glorifying failure is based on a few misunderstandings. The first is that we always learn from our mistakes, "when there is no evidence of anything of the kind." The second is that mistakes should be made less scary, so that we aren't paralyzed with fear when we need to take decisive action. But equally, doing harm isn't justified simply because we've made "an honest mistake." Ermotti should have told his bankers that sometimes risks are appropriate, and sometimes things will go wrong. But when that happens, "no one must ever make light of their cock-ups."

The fall of an investment wizard

Michael Hiltzik
Los Angeles Times

"Bond King" Bill Gross is proving that "great investors, even those hailed as geniuses, aren't infallible," said Michael Hiltzik. A year ago, the 71-year-old investment guru abruptly quit Pimco, the firm he co-founded in 1971, to join Janus Capital. Now he is struggling to match his former fund's performance. If you'd invested \$10,000 in both at the time of Gross' job switch, you'd have \$10,171 at Pimco, but only \$9,750 at Janus. Both funds have been outperformed by the benchmark bond index, which would have grown it to about \$10,232. The results all support Pimco's notion, often wielded in the wake of Gross'

departure, that investing success depends on far more than any one person's talent. But then, Gross' "fabled magic touch was showing its age" even before he quit, with his Total Return Fund, the world's biggest mutual fund, losing 24 percent of its assets in the two years before he resigned. And in fact, his superb record is "beginning to look a bit like an accident of timing," with falling yields on Treasury bonds in the Gross era responsible for a huge increase in bond prices. He's been an exciting guy to watch over the years, "but when your money is on the line, sometimes boring is best."

The baseball great who became a fount of folk wisdom

Yogi Berra

1925–2015

Yogi Berra was one of the greatest catchers in baseball history. A Hall of Famer who played in 14 World Series with the New York Yankees, winning 10, he was voted onto the American League All-Star team 15 times and was one of only two catchers to win the league's MVP award three times. But while Berra's accomplishments on the diamond made him famous, it was his knack for spouting unwittingly witty epigrams that turned him into an American cultural icon. He coined the famous line "It ain't over 'til it's over" and delighted even non-sports fans with nonsensical yet sagacious nuggets like "When you come to a fork in road, take it" and "The future ain't what it used to be." How many of these so-called Yogi-isms were journalistic embellishments remains unclear. As Berra himself put it, "I really didn't say everything I said."

Raised in St. Louis by Italian immigrant parents, Lawrence Berra earned the nickname "Yogi" after a childhood friend remarked that he looked like a "snake charmer in a movie," said *CNN.com*. The baseball obsessive quit school in eighth grade to help support his family, and secured a contract with the Yankees in 1942—having already turned down the St. Louis Cardinals because they didn't offer him a big enough signing bonus. After a year in the minor leagues, Berra joined the Navy, seeing combat on D-Day and later winning a Purple Heart, before returning to the game in 1946. He made his Yankees debut that year and was named the team's full-time catcher in 1948. Berra "came to symbolize the Yankees during their greatest era of success," said *The Washington Post*. Despite having an "awkward running gait that drew hoots from spectators and



opposing players," he hit .300—"the benchmark of batting excellence"—in three seasons, and played in and won more World Series than any other player in history. He was a big talker at the plate, chatting to umpires, teammates, and opposing batsmen. "Baseball," he explained, "is 90 percent mental; the other half is physical."

By the end of his 19-year playing career with the Yankees, Berra had "worked his way into the American consciousness," said the *Los Angeles Times*. He had a cartoon character named after him—Yogi Bear—and appeared in commercials for products as varied as "beer, potato chips, a fast-food chain, and cat food." A year after retiring in 1963, Berra was appointed Yankees manager, but was fired when the team lost the 1964 World Series to the Cardinals. He crossed town to coach the New York Mets and served as the team's manager from 1972 to '75, winning the National League Eastern Division title before another World Series defeat cost him his job.

World Series defeat cost him his job.

Berra returned to manage the Yankees in 1984, but was sacked just 16 games into the next season. The nature of his firing—the team's owner, George Steinbrenner, sent an underling to deliver the dismissal—"provoked one of baseball's legendary feuds," said *The New York Times*. He refused to set foot in Yankee Stadium for 14 years, and only ended his boycott when Steinbrenner apologized in person, asked Berra to throw out the first pitch at the season opener, and organized a Yogi Berra Day. Berra remained beloved to the end—but didn't take any chances. "Always go to other people's funerals," he once declared. "Otherwise, they won't go to yours."

The actor-playwright who couldn't escape *Superman*

Jack Larson

1928–2015

Jack Larson balked in 1952 when he was offered the role of bubbly, bow-tied cub reporter Jimmy Olsen on the *Adventures of Superman* TV series. Then 24, Larson nursed serious acting ambitions and was afraid of becoming typecast. His agent predicted the show would never get picked up for broadcast and urged him to "take the money and run." Larson relented, signing on for 26 episodes at \$250 apiece—only to see his worst fears come true. With George Reeves starring as the caped crime fighter, *Superman* ran for six seasons and achieved pop culture immortality through six decades, and counting, of syndication. While Larson later found success as a playwright and librettist, he never shook the image of eager, incompetent Jimmy, exclaiming "Golly!" and "Jeepers!" as he bumbled into danger. "If I should win the Pulitzer Prize," Larson said, "when they write my obituary it will say, 'Jack Larson, best remembered as Jimmy Olsen.'"

A Los Angeles native, Larson was not a stellar high school student, "often ditching class to go bowling," said the *Los Angeles Times*. A Shakespeare class sparked his interest in drama, "and he began writing and directing plays at Pasadena City College." Spotted by Warner Brothers talent scouts, Larson was cast in the



1948 war movie *Fighter Squadron*. After a few more small film parts, he set his sights on Broadway—but then *Superman* intervened. Larson's amiably naïve Jimmy Olsen typically found "himself trapped in a cave, tied up in a basement, or caught in rising waters," said *The Washington Post*. Superman always came to his rescue, and Olsen somehow never noticed the Man of Steel's uncanny resemblance to Clark Kent, his bespectacled *Daily Planet* colleague. Reeves' apparent suicide in 1959 ended the series, but Larson found he couldn't escape

his most famous role. "I was really bitter for years about being [typecast]," he said. "It absolutely wrecked my acting career."

Larson turned to writing on the advice of actor Montgomery Clift, with whom "he was having a romantic relationship," said *The New York Times*. The first playwright to be awarded a Rockefeller Foundation grant, he saw several of his works staged, notably the libretto for Virgil Thomson's final opera, 1972's *Lord Byron*; he also co-produced films with the late director James Bridges, his life partner. Over the years Larson gradually "embraced the Jimmy Olsen legacy," even doing cameos in *Superman* films and TV shows. "I'm proud of it and I would certainly do it again in hindsight," he said of his signature role. "It's nice not to be forgotten."

The world's biggest pet store

Germany's Zoo Zajac has 250,000 animals in stock, said Ben Crair, from armadillos to meerkats to sloths.

NORBERT ZAJAC got his first pet, a golden hamster, when he was 4 years old. He took good care of her and bought a second hamster one year later. By the time he was 8, Zajac had bred more than 100 golden hamsters in the basement of his family's little home. His parents, a highway cop and a housewife in Gladbeck, Germany, said he could keep as many pets as he wanted, as long as he paid for them himself.

Zajac began selling hamsters to local pet shops. He diversified, adding guinea pigs, salamanders, tortoises, and a crocodile. He took over the family garden and started raising birds. "When I found out about an animal, I wanted to hold it, and when I held an animal, I wanted to breed it," Zajac says. When he was in fifth grade, schools began taking field trips to his house. He became Germany's youngest licensed parrot breeder in 1967, when he was 13, and quickly cornered the local market on parakeets by training them to breed at Christmastime. At 14, Zajac asked a career counselor what he should do with his life. He was told to become a steelworker.

It was easy advice to give in the 1970s to a young man from the Ruhr Valley, the heart of the West German steel industry and the most populated part of the country. Zajac, who never graduated from high school, worked early shifts at the steel mill so he could be home to tend his animals before dusk. At 18, he sold most of his pets after he was conscripted into the military. Two years later, he was working again at the mill when he saw an advertisement in the local paper. A pregnant woman in the city of Duisburg, near the Dutch border, was trying to sell her pet shop before she gave birth. Zajac borrowed money from his father and took over the small store on a quiet residential street in 1975.

Today, Zajac's pet shop fills a 130,000-square-foot warehouse in an industrial part of Duisburg. It's called Zoo Zajac, and it unfurls, like an airport terminal, along a horseshoe in the road. It's more



Norbert Zajac's massive shop attracts about 1 million visitors each year.

than twice the size of the White House, and is, according to Guinness World Records, the biggest pet shop in the world. A visitor can spend as much as 9,000 euros (\$10,000) on a two-toed sloth or as little as 1.19 euros (\$1.34) on a box of crickets. She can buy armadillos, meerkats, coatis, and monkeys; or fill aquariums with jellyfish, tetras, shellfish, and piranhas. Zoo Zajac sells 50 species of tarantula and maintains one of the finest reptile collections in Western Europe—better, even, than many zoos'. It houses about 250,000 individual animals of 3,000 different species. A walk around the place is essentially an endurance sport, which is why Zajac, a heavy man with two bad knees, zips up and down the aisles on a black moped. The vehicle never leaves the premises and logs more than 2,500 miles a year.

ZOO ZAJAC HAS become for the Ruhr Valley what Zajac's childhood home was for his classmates. "It's almost used as a gratis zoo by the people," says Ulrich Schürer, the former director of the nearby Zoo Wuppertal. As many as 12,000 visitors will arrive on a Saturday, and many of them won't buy anything at all, except for perhaps a currywurst or coffee at the cafeteria. Even the proper customers rarely obtain animals; the majority purchase only the tens of thousands of pet-care products that line the shelves between Zoo Zajac's tanks and cages: everything from aquarium

filters to dog leashes to eyedrops for turtles. Live animals are expensive to maintain in a pet shop, and demand is relatively small. In the U.S., they make up only 6 percent of the retail pet market. "A pet store mostly subsists off of accessories and merchandise associated with the animal," Zajac says. "If I sold only animals, I would lose 250,000 euros a year."

This has given rise to what he calls, sneeringly, *die Tierhandlung ohne Tiere*, or "the pet shop without pets." Many of the most successful pet businesses have stopped selling

animals or scaled back to just a few low-maintenance species, even though their customers are crazier than ever about their little friends. In Western countries, where family sizes are shrinking, pet owners no longer treat their animals as property, but as children, pampering them with products and services that would have once seemed ridiculous: bottled water, gluten-free kibble, doggy diapers, designer beds. The "humanization" trend has benefited more than just animals. The U.S. pet industry has more than tripled, to \$60 billion, over the past 20 years, and pet care was one of the few retail industries to grow during the Great Recession.

Much of that growth, though, has accrued to big-box retailers rather than small pet shops. Chains slashed operating costs by eliminating live animals, and exploited economies of scale to sell an ever-increasing variety of products as cheaply as possible. In the U.S., PetSmart and Petco Animal Supplies capture more than half of industry revenue. In Germany, the pet-care chain Fressnapf operates more than 800 locations and claims nearly a third of all sales. Germany still has more than 5,000 independent pet shops, but their market share has dwindled to less than 15 percent.

"See the Bible, David and Goliath," says Zajac. "I am the little one with the sling-shot." It's not the identification you would expect from the owner of the biggest pet shop in the world, but bigness was, for

Zajac, an adaptation. While many independent shops disappeared or turned to high-end services like grooming or day care, Zajac took the opposite tack. He survived not through specialization, but through spectacle—by building a pet shop so large that it has gravitational pull.

Zajac's personal tour of Zoo Zajac can last as long as five hours and never takes less than two. Highlights include Zajac feeding grasshoppers to a family of little monkeys, who bite off the heads and gobble up the bodies two-handed, like a hoagie, and a call-and-response duet between peacocks and the horn on Zajac's moped. Zajac might also feed fresh eggs from his chickens to a monitor lizard, or tell you to look up when you pass underneath the sloths, who hang from ropes on the ceiling. He'll warn you not to pet the ferrets: Last year he called five ambulances for ferret bites alone.

After he's led you through the exotic mammals, the terrarium, the garden, the aquarium, the puppies, the birds, and the small mammals, he might take you to the parking lot for one of his favorite shows of all. On a recent Saturday morning, Zajac rested his hand on the trunk of a customer's car and leaned over to examine the license plate. "Cologne," he said. "A hundred kilometers." Zajac had left his moped inside, so he shuffled to the next car and inspected its license plate as well. "Wuppertal," he said. "Eighty kilometers." He continued down the row of tiny European vehicles, estimating the distance of their journey to his store. Zajac was disappointed to find only a couple of international visitors, from the Netherlands; often he finds plates from hundreds of miles away, from France, Poland, and the U.K.

GERMANY ISN'T THE country where most people would expect to find the world's biggest pet shop. Most German businesses are modest enterprises, and consumers there aren't impressed by immensity in and of itself. But German pet ownership gets a little weird. In the U.S. the humanization trend has ridden largely on the backs of dogs and cats, whose owners spend the most money on their pets but are the least likely to buy their animals in pet shops. Germany, however, has some of the lowest rates of dog and cat ownership in all of Europe. Instead, there's an abundance of so-called exotic pets. Germans keep more small mammals—everything from chinchillas to ferrets to rabbits—per capita than all other Europeans, save the Dutch, and the country also has large populations of pet reptiles and fish.

Partly this is because of a "dog tax" that Germany imposes on owners of man's best friend, but there are other reasons for the popularity of rodents and reptiles. These animals suit Germans' famously fastidious lifestyles. "Small animals make less mess," Zajac says, "and they do not bother the neighbors." Germans are also, by reputation, more analytical than sentimental, which could help explain their interest in animals that are observed in tanks or cages rather than commingled in the family home. Seven of the 10 most visited European zoos in 2013 were in Germany, and the remaining three were in German-



Zoo Zajac sells everything from dog leashes to turtle eyedrops.

speaking Austria and Switzerland. (Zoo Zajac, which has about 1 million visitors annually, would rank in the top 30 of European zoos if it were eligible.)

Zoo Zajac's growth was fueled by Germany's development into the European country with the most money and the lowest birth-rate, the two factors that lead consumers to lavish money on their pets. Residents of North Rhine-Westphalia, the state that contains Duisburg, spend more on their pets than any other Germans. Zajac used to laugh about customers who spoiled their pets like children, but by 2000 their behavior was the norm. "Before, if somebody had a pond in their backyard, they would buy a bunch of goldfish at Easter and plant a bunch of flowers around the pond," he says. "One week after Easter, the plants would be dead and the goldfish would be dead, too. Now if you buy a goldfish and it gets sick, you take it to the veterinarian."

Zoo Zajac opened in its current location on Nov. 17, 2004. A few months later, Guinness World Records paid a visit. Zoo Zajac was, at the time, two-thirds of its present size, still large enough to earn it the distinction of the biggest pet shop in the world. Zajac lives on the second floor in a modest apartment behind his office with his wife, Jutta, and a mother-daughter pair

of dachshunds. "I had to help the mother give birth here on the living room table," he says. When Zajac is watching TV or relaxing in his hot tub, he's never more than a flight of stairs away from his animal collection, just like when he bred hamsters in his basement as a little boy.

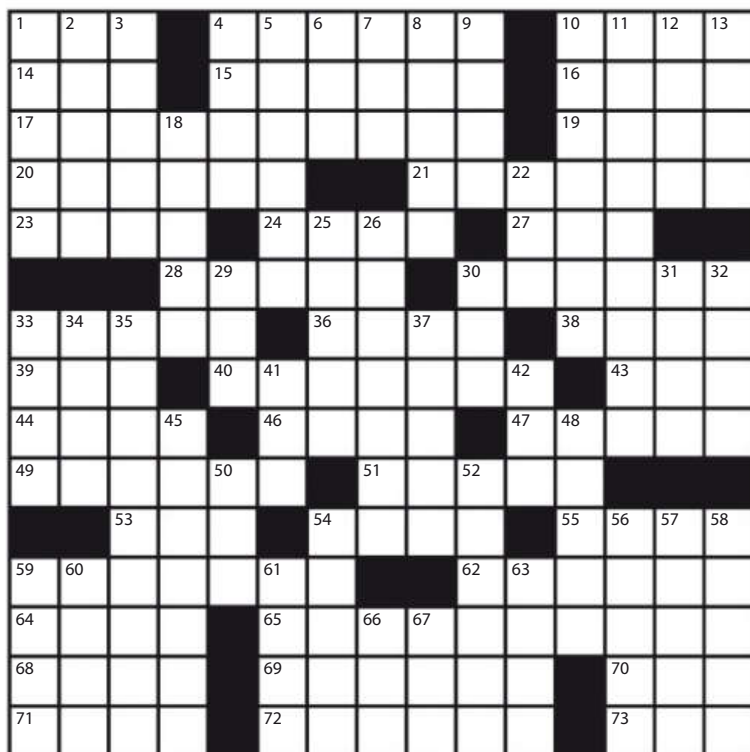
IN 2012, ZAJAC added a controversial mammal to his inventory. Animal rights activists picketed the store and called him greedy and irresponsible. More than 25,000 people sent a protest letter from PETA that included a cartoon of Zajac strangling the creature with a price tag around its neck. Zajac says he received multiple bomb and death threats. One pet food manufacturer withdrew its products from the store's shelves. Even the German Pet Trade & Industry Association didn't support him. Zoo Zajac had started selling puppies.

Zajac always sold dog food and supplies, but like all German pet shop owners, he'd stopped selling dogs themselves in the 1970s. He quit cats in 1985. People increasingly disapproved of the sale of the most affectionate species, and, despite Zoo Zajac's continual growth, it was hard to find sufficient space for cats and dogs in the store. Germany never legally prohibited their sale, but no other German pet shop was selling dogs when Zoo Zajac resumed in 2012. Zajac spent 800,000 euros on large kennels with heated floors and outdoor sections.

Today, Zoo Zajac is still the only pet store in Germany where you can buy a dog.

The biggest question facing Zoo Zajac today may be whether it can outlive the man who built it. Zajac is just 60 years old, but he's not a paragon of health. He claims to have already died and been resuscitated on the operating table four times. The first three deaths came after he was stung by lionfish at Zoo Zajac, and the fourth happened during knee replacement surgery. He's entrusted 49 percent of the company to his eldest daughter, Katja Banaszak, who will run it when he's no longer able. "He always has extreme ideas," she says, with loving exasperation. "He wants to have penguins." Zajac thinks he can get them from a German zoo, but so far his daughter has persuaded him to hold off. Banaszak doesn't think the world's biggest pet shop needs penguins, or any other new animals. "It's big enough already."

Excerpted from an article that originally appeared in Bloomberg.com. Reprinted with permission.

Crossword No. 330: Not Quite the Nobel by Matt Gaffney**ACROSS**

- 1 Question word that won researchers an Ig Nobel Prize in literature on Sept. 17; they had discovered that all languages seem to have an equivalent of it
- 4 Small accident
- 10 Ladies
- 14 Hairy creature
- 15 Recorded
- 16 Recent visitor to the U.S.
- 17 The 2015 Ig Nobel in diagnostic medicine was awarded for assessing pain levels in patients with appendicitis by having them drive over these
- 19 Apartment or condo
- 20 Penn pal?
- 21 Hardly cutting-edge
- 23 In the neighborhood of
- 24 Besides
- 27 X number of
- 28 *The Taming of the Shrew* city
- 30 Blackfeet, Ojibwe, etc.
- 33 Windshield cleaner
- 36 Unproductive
- 38 Vitamin K source
- 39 Dark and introspective
- 40 The 2015 Ig Nobel in medicine was won by scientists studying the biomedical effects of this activity
- 43 ___ burgers (Australian food)
- 44 Like some eagles
- 46 Group of oxen
- 47 Mr. Welles

- 49 Middling grade
- 51 Hot drink
- 53 Tesla, for one
- 54 "Let me get this straight..."
- 55 Monopoly card
- 59 The Red River flows through it
- 62 Steel pad
- 64 Like Hephaestus
- 65 The 2015 Ig Nobel in chemistry went to a team who figured out a process to undo the cooking of this food (with 70-Across)
- 68 Such a long time
- 69 Four-time Pulitzer-winning playwright
- 70 See 65-Across
- 71 "I forbid it!"
- 72 "Woo-hoo!"
- 73 Bill in a bow tie

DOWN

- 1 Lacks other options
- 2 Stimulant
- 3 Tricky pair of shoes
- 4 Setting
- 5 Without a wide family tree
- 6 Sutcliffe once in the Beatles
- 7 Ingredient in a medianoche
- 8 Jobs project
- 9 Cancún cash
- 10 Space race satellite
- 11 The 2015 Ig Nobel in physiology went to a scientist who allowed these creatures to sting him on 25 parts of his body so he could see where it hurt the most
- 12 Monumental
- 13 Funny Green
- 18 Flee to wed
- 22 Series of battles
- 25 ___ Rainer (two-time Best Actress winner)
- 26 Downer
- 29 Big boat
- 30 Perfect score
- 31 Patron saint of sailors
- 32 Told, as tales
- 33 Under-the-radar Democratic candidate
- 34 Mosque man
- 35 The city of Bangkok won the 2015 Ig Nobel in economics for paying these workers extra money not to take bribes
- 37 Long rides?
- 41 Word with or without an apostrophe
- 42 Gunk
- 45 Settler of paternity questions
- 48 Spokes
- 50 Ornamental holder
- 52 Be the sole provider?
- 54 Arabian Peninsula native
- 56 Page in entertainment magazines
- 57 Grave words
- 58 Keep away from
- 59 Putin, to pals
- 60 Bard's backstabber
- 61 Sea shout
- 63 Purpose
- 66 Weight-room count
- 67 Swift swim

The Week Contest

This week's question: NASA scientists say they have found compelling evidence that there is liquid water on Mars. If NASA were to start selling Martian mineral water here on Earth, what brand name should be on the bottle?

Last week's contest: Researchers have discovered that chimps and bonobos become so engrossed in short films that feature humans dressed in ape costumes that they can't even be distracted by their favorite foods. If a TV network were to make an ape-themed soap opera for these simian screen addicts, what would it be called?

THE WINNER: "The Young and the Rhesus"
Chris Mazur, Lebanon, N.H.

SECOND PLACE: "Orangutan is the New Black"
Paul Heyworth, San Francisco

THIRD PLACE: "I Love Lucy Australopithecus"
Andrew Tuite, Chicago

For runners-up and complete contest rules, please go to theweek.com/contest.

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, please type "Mars mineral water" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, Oct. 6. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/puzzles on Friday, Oct. 9. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.

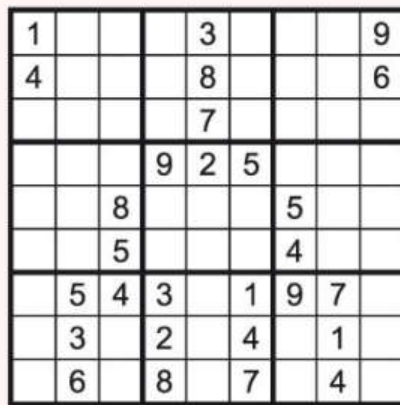


◀ The winner gets a one-year subscription to *The Week*.

Sudoku

Fill in all the boxes so that each row, column, and outlined square includes all the numbers from 1 through 9.

Difficulty: medium



Find the solutions to all *The Week's* puzzles online: www.theweek.com/puzzle.

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